

0:00:04.0 Katie Berlin: Hi, welcome back to Central Line. I'm your host, Katie Berlin. I'm here with special guest today, Melody Martinez. I apologize ahead of time if this episode is a million years long, because I have met Melody now twice, and for some reason cannot shut up around her, so I think this is gonna be a fun conversation. I apologize if it's long, but I think it'll be good. So Melody, welcome to Central Line. Thank you so much for being here.

0:00:31.7 Melody Martinez: Hi, Katie, thank you so much for having me.

0:00:34.3 Katie Berlin: So Melody, would you mind just giving us a little bit of background about yourself and how you got to be here talking to us?

0:00:41.4 Melody Martinez: Yeah, I am a certified veterinary technician. I've been a technician since, oh, about 2007. Feels like two life times ago, and I've been... So I've been in and out of the veterinary industry. Around 2015, I stopped working clinically and actually left the industry altogether to work in social justice, human-centered like non-profits, particularly food justice and environmental justice. And then eventually kind of pivoted that into philanthropy. So fundraising, non-profit fundraising, as well as consultation and facilitation of DEI. So currently, I work as a DEI consultant with my own firm and work with all manner of clients. So I work with a lot of mission-driven organizations, non-profits, some universities, as well as for-profit businesses. And usually the for-profit businesses I work with are businesses that are really mission-driven, whether they're cooperative, so they have a non-traditional structure to what they do or they're really centering like their brand is about really centering who they are, what they believe, and that being kind of unique for whatever industry that they're in. So yeah, I do a lot of DEI coaching and consultation as well as organizational culture, assessments, things like that. Helping organizations really kind of live into the values that they say that they have and making sure that the people that work there really feel those values and are part of helping embed them into the culture of the organization.

0:02:35.3 Melody Martinez: I'm also the president of the Multicultural Veterinary Medical Association, first veterinary technician as president, and we are the only one 'cause there's only been... We've only been around for so long [laughter] still. But yeah, we're a non-profit that focuses on diversifying the veterinary profession and really talking about what equity and inclusion looks like, helping lead the efforts for equity, racial equity in particular and inclusion in the veterinary profession. And so really excited MCVMA is the organization I've been waiting for my whole career. I just hadn't realized that until they showed up, so really grateful. I'm really grateful for them 'cause I think a lot of the opportunities, me feeling like re-integrated into the profession after leaving clinical space, I think I really chalk it up to MCVMA. But I was volunteering a lot, I was still within the realm of the veterinary profession, but I didn't feel as close to it as I once had when I was a tech every day. And so yeah, I worked in animal welfare as well, I worked at Farm Sanctuary in New York, where I was a caregiver for two years. So I worked with large animals, poetry, just all manner of...

0:03:57.1 Melody Martinez: I couldn't be satiated. [laughter] And so when that ended, I was like, "Let's do emergency." I kind of just went all over the place until I really realized I wanted to do something different, and my return was about using what I've learned to come back into the space and make it better than how it was when I left the clinical practice. So yeah, that's a lot about me.

0:04:22.4 Katie Berlin: It's a long and winding road for sure, and not a typical story, but that actually is typical of a lot of the people that we talk to on this podcast. Because I think everybody

has got a sort of an origin story about why they are here, why they stayed, why they came back, and why they're doing the specific thing that they're doing now. Which usually is may be a little bit different than what they saw at the beginning. In terms of your own sort of guiding light in the work that you do, what is it for you, what is that light, what's powering that guiding light?

0:04:57.1 Melody Martinez: For me, it's always been a vision of a more just society, and I think that that started... If I could say it in one sentence, that's it. But I think that really started actually with my career in veterinary medicine, right? Like I did not... If you asked me in 2006, if that was my guiding principle, it wouldn't have been. Not because it wasn't. It's 'cause I didn't realize. I didn't realize it. And in veterinary medicine, I think I found what I loved about. I was talking to one of my old bosses the other day. And I said, "I went into emergency, and as much as I loved the advanced things, I was able to do all of that I was learning, the pace of it all. I had never felt more empowered as a technician than an emergency." But I said, "I really missed the connection with the clients. 'Cause oftentimes a triage, it would come to the back, and that's where the text kinda hung out. We didn't really interact with the clients as much." And I said, "I really missed that piece." And she said to me, "That's not a surprise to me, that's always who you were. You were always greatest in the exam room, even though you were a surgical tech, eventually you are greatest in the exam room. You're good with people."

0:06:14.2 Melody Martinez: And I said, "What I loved about kind of being in general practice and being able to connect with clients was that I was part of building their toolkit," right? So part of my... I wanna make the world a more just place. It wasn't just for people, but for everyone, for animals, right, as well. And so part of that was being a guide for those owners to be kinder towards their animals, be better stewards of care, be better stewards of humanity. Like how good can humans be towards another species, right? And so for me, that was my guiding principle then, was just like, I love this because I get to be someone who helps someone else be really great, a really great example of humanity. And that still guides me today. Whether it's with animals or with people, I just want... Or whether it's with work places, where it's like, "Can I help guide an organization to be showing its best self to its staff, showing its best self to its clients or its customers, or to whoever is like the service user if it's a non-profit on the other end." I like helping people along.

0:07:41.6 Katie Berlin: I love it. And I love the way that you phrase that about, your role was to help somebody in that exam room, like holding their cat, be the best version of themselves that they could be to that cat and show that cat that humans are good too, and we're here to take care of you. That's a really noble mission, and I don't think I've ever heard anybody put it that way before, but I love that. It's a lot of responsibility when you think about it that way, but it's also, it's a really empowering opportunity for anybody on the veterinary team to say like, "I played a role in making that pet family's life better together."

0:08:24.2 Melody Martinez: Yeah, I always think of it, even if it was showing someone how to clean their dog's ears, who had never done it before. I was like, "Oh, this is so exciting. I get to show you this. Let me show you how to do this in a way that... So that you feel empowered. So that you feel you learned something. You know how to do this at home, you can take care of your dog really well, you understand how to do it in a way that supports your dog's mental health well-being. Like they're not scared," right?

0:08:51.9 Melody Martinez: All of these things that... And the person now knows how to do a

thing, right? I love that. I do it with my friends, they're like, "Hey, my dog is having this issue, my cat, I need help with this." And I'm like, "Bring them over. How can I help?" I love helping people learn some of those things so that they can feel like they can do it. And I think I actually... You know what? I think that that really started because that's the kind of culture, the practice where I kind of grew up as a tech, that's the kind of culture they had. And that's what made me feel like, "Hey, it was very teach one-do one." Right? And so I feel like that part of me of teaching others actually came from the people that surrounded me who taught me. And so yeah.

0:09:44.2 Katie Berlin: Very cool.

0:09:46.4 Melody Martinez: I just put that together now.

0:09:46.7 Katie Berlin: Oh.

0:09:46.8 Melody Martinez: I'd never thought of that before.

0:09:49.2 Katie Berlin: That's very cool.

[laughter]

0:09:50.3 Katie Berlin: Yeah. I mean, if you were in a place where everybody rolls their eyes when they have to teach a client something, that's what you're gonna absorb. And if you work at a place where the culture is, this is an opportunity to be part of something special, and have this person walk out of here feeling like they can do this and it's gonna make everyone's lives better. Then that's a completely different vibe. And if that's what you take with you, it's gonna change your whole career, so, yeah.

0:10:17.3 Melody Martinez: Yeah.

0:10:17.7 Katie Berlin: Very, very cool.

0:10:17.9 Melody Martinez: Yeah. Yep. I was very lucky to work with technicians assistants who when I was first learning, who were very excited to help me along and did not roll their eyes, and did not huff, and did not do any of those things like, "I can't believe I have to do this." They were excited for the help [laughter] and they were excited to be... I think they were excited to be in the position of helping someone else, right? And so, yeah.

0:10:49.7 Katie Berlin: Well, that's a good segue for today, because we are talking about the mentoring guidelines and about mentoring in general. Mentorship is not limited. We talk a lot about veterinarians, new grad veterinarians finding a mentor and stuff like that. But every member of the veterinary team could use some really good mentorship. And we'll talk a lot about what that might look like. But I was wondering, we've had a number of task force members on the podcast, several technicians, and I am always interested to know because I think it's a really great part of the task force that we have people in different roles sort of collaborating on these. I think we have a vet student on the task force too, and that was exciting and such an important part of understanding what good mentorship looks like. But what was it like for you being on the task force? Did you have a good experience?

0:11:47.2 Melody Martinez: I did, I loved it. I pretty much knew most of the people who were on the task force prior to joining, I remember when I got the email asking me to join, and I actually emailed back to the AHA Contact and I said, "Did you mean to send this to me?"

0:12:08.2 Katie Berlin: No, you didn't. [laughter]

0:12:10.7 Melody Martinez: I did. I did.

0:12:11.6 Katie Berlin: Were you like, "Is someone punking me? Like do they mean me?"

0:12:13.0 Melody Martinez: Yeah. I really thought so. Like I said, "Did you mean to send this to me?" I said, "I'm a technician, and I didn't realize that I could be a part of that. I didn't realize that I was being looked at to for my expertise in a certain area."

0:12:30.3 Katie Berlin: Oh my gosh.

0:12:31.2 Melody Martinez: And so I literally emailed back and I was like, "I think you made a mistake. Did you mean to send this to me? I'm not a doctor." And they were like, "No, we meant to send it you to you." [laughter]

0:12:46.2 Katie Berlin: Oh my God. [laughter]

0:12:46.9 Melody Martinez: And I was like, "Oh." [laughter]

0:12:48.0 Katie Berlin: I have so many feelings about that. [laughter] Like on the one hand, I hate that, that like this isn't just normal to have technicians and managers and CSRs just waiting for the call to contribute all of this experience and knowledge, on the other hand, I'm so glad that you got that email. [laughter] And also, it makes me think of when I got accepted to Vet school, the first school that I heard from was Cornell, and they didn't do interviews or anything, and so I heard from them way early, and the Dean, Dean Smith called me, he just called us on the phone, and it was like before Christmas, so I thought I had weeks to wait, and he just called everyone and he was like, "Congratulations," and I was like, "Yeah, who is this is?" And he's like, "It's Dean Smith." And I was like, "Mm-hmm." And he's like, "Would you like me to give him my office number so you can call me back? I get my assistant because it's definitely me." I absolutely thought someone was punking me, and so instead I told the dean of the entire vet college that he wasn't who he said he was, it was a good start to my session, so I either career, but anyway, that's what it made me think of.

0:14:07.4 Katie Berlin: So we all have that moment, but I hope the next time you get an email like that, you will immediately believe it is for you. [laughter]

0:14:15.0 Melody Martinez: Yeah. I think, I don't even remember if there were... I don't think anyone else was copied. Like, I didn't get to see that everyone else on the task force was a doctor, but I don't think I saw that. I think it just came to me and I was just like... There was also no context. Like so and so gave me your name. As someone who could, it was just kind of like, "We want you to do this." And I was like, "You have the wrong person."

0:14:38.8 Katie Berlin: [laughter] Amazing, amazing. [laughter]

0:14:45.1 Melody Martinez: But my experience was actually really great. It was such an interesting thing. I was really honored to be a part of it. I knew everyone who was on the task force at least, or I knew of them. One of the people on the task force was actually one of my former coworkers who's a veterinarian at that hospital I was just describing. And the other person, the one person that I didn't really know that well, actually was just recently on your pod podcast, Dr Wolf.

0:15:17.0 Katie Berlin: Yeah. Oh, actually.

0:15:18.4 Melody Martinez: And we actually got...

0:15:18.5 Katie Berlin: Pause for a second. I realized that I will not release this before the guidelines are out because we don't tell people who you are until the guidelines are out. [laughter] So we protect your anonymity until the guidelines are published.

0:15:30.6 Melody Martinez: I see.

0:15:32.0 Katie Berlin: And so I'm gonna strike that and the guidelines will already be out. So this will not be out until July. So you can name names if you want to. [laughter]

0:15:38.8 Melody Martinez: Okay, great. Yeah, so I didn't know, was the... Dr. Wolf was probably the person I knew the least, and it was so great to be in that space because we got to know each other in that space. We actually worked together in one of the work groups, and I got to know them better. And now we've since collaborated on several lectures and are continuing to collaborate. And now they've moved to the same town as me. So we're getting to know each other a little bit better and working together more. And they're just so fabulous. And so I was just like, it was just such a good experience because it felt, here's a bunch of people, someone who was very familiar to me, who I used to work with and I consider a friend and a bunch of people that I kind of knew of or knew through my contacts in the veterinary world.

0:16:33.2 Melody Martinez: And I just got to know people. It was really collegial in that way. And it really, it was also just great to like see, hear and learn from so many people. And I think part of that too was the way it was facilitated, the way it was kind of put together. We had a lot of context before going into our actual meetings. The meetings were over a couple of days. And I was just floored at how much we could get done in just like a weekend.

0:17:04.3 Katie Berlin: Yeah.

0:17:07.1 Melody Martinez: I was like... And so I, as a facilitator of groups, things like that, I was just really marveled by how well organized it was, and how effective it was at getting us to just get all of our ideas out, talk together, really kind of argue back and forth with each other. If there were things we were not really sure of how to say or how to articulate or had disagreements. It was just really a really great learning space. Yeah, it was... And I had never experienced a task force like that, that was really effective really quickly. So I thought that was fantastic.

0:17:47.8 Katie Berlin: That's awesome to hear. I'm gonna pass that on because Dr. Ingrid Taylor, who coordinates and makes the guidelines happen, is just astonishing. She's fantastic. And she'll love to hear that. And also shout out to Mia Cary. Dr. Mia Cary, who's the facilitator extraordinaire.

[laughter]

0:18:10.1 Melody Martinez: Yes, yes, yes. I was taking notes. I was like, "This is really well done." [laughter]

0:18:16.7 Katie Berlin: Yeah. She apparently blows everyone's socks off, like at these task force meetings. So you're not the first person I've heard that from, so I'm glad. Do you have a favorite, like pearl of wisdom from the guidelines? Like, if you could just tell people one thing to take away from the guidelines, what's the thing that just struck you the most or that you feel is the most close to your heart? Narrow that entire thing down to one thing. That's all.

0:18:44.5 Melody Martinez: Yeah to one thing. [chuckle] I think it's the advice to know yourself, whether you're the mentor or the mentee, to really do some self-reflection about what it is that you're looking for in a mentorship relationship, what it is... And why you're doing it, why as a mentee, you're seeking mentorship... Why you're doing it as a mentor, like, what's in it for you, and really reflecting on what you need from the relationship. Because I think there's a lot of preconceived ideas about what mentorship should be. And the reality is that mentorship should be the thing that serves the mentee the most, the thing that allows that person to grow, and supports their career trajectory or just their personal... Whatever... If there's personal goals involved, their personal goals as well. So I think that piece is like the more you know yourself and what you're trying to get out of this and why you're doing it, I think the better off you're gonna be finding the right support system.

0:19:53.8 Katie Berlin: Yeah, that really struck me too about the guidelines, is the emphasis on like the better you know yourself and the better... 'Cause not just what you wanna get out of the relationship, but also where your strengths are and doing the work to learn how to communicate more effectively and to say, "Okay, this is an area where I need to improve, and this is gonna be really important to this relationship, and the success of my mentee," if you're on the mentor side. Like, that's one of the things I love about these guidelines, is they don't mince words in terms of like you are... It's not an SOP checklist that you can just check off these tasks, that's training. [chuckle] That's like, I taught her how to use the anesthesia machine and she passed a quiz, like, she hooked it up in front of me.

0:20:45.7 Melody Martinez: Yeah. [laughter]

0:20:48.0 Katie Berlin: This is such an in-depth and personalized experience. And you can't get away with not doing the work if you want it to be successful. And that I think is what the guidelines really impressed upon me is like, this is an expectation of yourself as well as of the person that you're working with. So I think that was really cool. And I was wondering, during that... You said there were times when you guys had kind of spirited discussions, [laughter] opportunities for clarification together. [laughter]

0:21:20.7 Melody Martinez: Yes. [laughter]

0:21:21.2 Katie Berlin: Was that something that everybody just brought to the table and agreed on right away, or was there some spirited discussion around that in terms of like what that sort of self-responsibility looked like?

0:21:35.8 Melody Martinez: I don't think that there were disagreements that were value-centered in nature, I think everyone who came to the table agreed on some core things. Like, we agreed that diversity, equity and inclusion were important to include as part of these guidelines, for example. We agreed that sometimes the relationship doesn't work out, and that doesn't mean you should just stick with it. I think any disagreements we had weren't true disagreements, they were more like, "That's not how I would have communicated that. It's not what I think I would have done," or like, "How do we clarify that so that it's actually getting to the heart of what we're trying to say?"

0:22:22.4 Melody Martinez: So it was more like people would come with an opinion about something and others would be like, "What does that mean?" or, "What if it's taken this way?" or, "How do we say that thing that you're saying in a way that does not push people away?" I don't know if that's the correct word. I just remember there was one part of the process where we were reviewing each other's sections, the ones that we were leading each... That was one of the great things about this, was leading different sections so people could really... Their strengths could come through. Or they could really contribute heavily to a certain section, and then we would each go in and review and say, "Ooh, this is something I would add," or, "I have a question about this," or, "What does this mean?" And those were times when we were each reviewing each other's sections and then going back and discussing that things could get into not... I wouldn't... Argument is a strong word. Disagreement is a strong word. It's more of like, "Let's learn from each other because that's not the way I would see that," or, "That's not how I would think to do that," or, "That's not what... That's not mentorship, that's training, or that's coaching," and then someone clarifying, "Well, this aspect of it is what I'm trying to get to."

0:23:48.2 Melody Martinez: And so I think that... I think that for the most part, it was a really respectful space. I think one of the things about it too was that... And there were some really content experts in that room. And one of the things that I remember appreciating about it was that it was so great to have Dr. Reinhardt, for example, Dr. Valerie Marcano of PAWSibilities. It was really great to have people in the room who have been doing mentorship, who like... That's their bread and butter, running mentorship programs and talking about mentorship, because it was great to hear what their real life experience with it has been as they've seen people go through cycles of mentorship or have been mentored themselves. And it was also great to have voices of people who weren't as steeped into that so that we could say, "Well, does that really work?" or, "Here's how I... Here's an example of what happened to me where that didn't happen."

0:24:53.8 Melody Martinez: So I think that there was an air of respect for the knowledge and wisdom and experience that every person brought into that space. And I also think that part of it, and this goes back to [chuckle] Ingrid, Taylor and Mia, is prior to even talking with each other, like, meeting each other, we had a digital space where we were sharing research, where we were sharing articles, where we were commenting on things. So I could tell who was bringing what, what kind of things certain people were prioritizing or valuing, how they were... We would read the same research articles and come to some different conclusions, or I'd pick one thing out that stuck out to me, someone else will pick out something different that stuck out to them. So I thought that it was just such a great space for learning that even when things weren't eye to eye, it was clearly looked at as like we're tugging at this because we're wanting to learn what is the right path forward. So yeah, it was a really respectful place. And I think everyone in that room had a lot of respect for each other and a lot of respect for what they brought to the table.

0:26:11.6 Katie Berlin: That's wonderful. There are some very opinionated people on our task

forces. Looking at the list of people who worked on this document, there are some very strong opinions in that group. And to hear that there was respect, not just for what someone was saying at that moment, but also what they were bringing with them, their experiences and the voice that they had that could make the guidelines better, that diversity of voice only strengthens the material.

0:26:42.9 Melody Martinez: Yeah. And I think what's at the heart of that was that, again, we were not fundamentally disagreeing... This is what... It's something I tell my clients, is like, when they're thinking about hiring, for example, bringing in someone whose values are opposite to the values of your clinic or the values of your organization or fundamentally against a certain value on your task force, that's going to create conflict that usually cannot be reconciled. For example, the mentorship guidelines, this time around, we really wanted to talk about how diversity, equity and inclusion... Which has not been talked about as much before in mentorship, why it's so important to talk about that, especially as the veterinary field continues to diversify; racially diversify, diversify by people with different sexual orientation. There's just so... A gender identity. There's so many things, so many social markers that are now openly present in our field that really weren't before, and why that was important. No one on that task force disagreed that diversity, equity and inclusion was important. Had there been one person who did, I think there would have been conflict. So that's really important, is... Irreconcilable kinds of conflict. And so that's the really important thing, is that fundamentally at our core, we all had shared belief systems, but there's nuances in how... Nuances in strategy, nuances in how to communicate that, nuances in what should be prioritized.

0:28:29.8 Melody Martinez: So I think that that's so important to working together well, is saying, "Hey, at the end of the day, I don't disagree with you on this core thing, but how we get there or how we do it, I think that's up for discussion." And I think that's kind of where we were as a task force, where we were like, "We all fundamentally... No one here disagrees with anyone's lived experience, disagrees with these core values related to the veterinary profession, related to society, related to mentorship, but there's a lot of nuance in how we get... We communicate this, or we understand this, or how we integrate it into these guidelines." And I think that's what led to healthy debates, especially where there were strong opinions. And I also think that what was great about the task force was that we were a really diverse group of people, and so we were able to bring stuff... I was like, "I would not have thought of that because that's not my life, that's not my lived experience. So you bringing that in now totally makes sense, and I'm learning something. And I can see why it's so important to you." And I think that one of the things that was really great about that was that we looked at each other as like content leaders. I did not question someone whose experience was different than mine, who was bringing something that I would not have thought of, I was just like, "I believe you. Wow."

0:30:08.0 Melody Martinez: So that was a really great piece of this too, is that I think it made... Any mild disagreements, we knew they weren't gonna be the end of the world. [chuckle]

0:30:19.8 Katie Berlin: Right. 'Cause you were all trying to achieve the same thing.

0:30:24.3 Melody Martinez: Yeah. Yeah. And I think that was the piece too, where we all looked at each other... We knew each other. We were like, "Oh, this is an expert in this area. That's an expert in that area. This is great. I trust you." So I think that high level of trust with people's wisdom and experience actually made for a really great experience and felt like you were among equals. So that was really great.

0:30:53.8 Katie Berlin: Trust is really important to me. In fact, I have one Post-it. We were talking about not being able to live without project management software before we got on here. True, but I have one Post-it stuck to my monitor, and this is what it says, [chuckle] because this is the core value for me. And I feel like no matter what we do, the guidelines... This goes back to the content of the guidelines, because nobody is saying you have to have a mentor that looks like you or that's had the same lived experience that you have, but you have to have a mentor, and as a mentor, you have to see the mentee and say, "Okay, this person is a subject matter expert in their own experience," and I have to remember that and not try to tell them that it's not that way.

0:31:40.5 Melody Martinez: Yes.

0:31:40.6 Katie Berlin: And if you have a mentor who doesn't feel that way, that's an irreconcilable difference. [chuckle] And Dr. Tina Tran is on the podcast not too long ago, and another past president of the MCVMA, and she's wonderful, and we were talking about that because now in her role at the University of Arizona, she's working on shaping the careers of future vets. And we were talking about how... That students may end up in clinical situations... In their model, they go out into clinics and work for their clinical rotations. And they may end up in a place where they don't have anybody there that understands their lived experience on a real visceral level, but the class comes when they don't believe that yours is different or valid, and I think that's a really key thing to take away from these guidelines for me anyway. It's like you don't have to pick somebody who understands you deeply, you have to pick somebody who wants to understand you and listen, and there's such a big difference there. And you're right, the field is diversifying. We're trying anyway, [chuckle] like, making strides, and that's key because a lot of the people in practice right now don't identify with a lot of the underrepresented groups that we're talking about trying to build pipelines to bring into the profession. And we can still be good mentors, but we have to listen.

0:33:21.4 Melody Martinez: Yes.

0:33:21.7 Katie Berlin: Yeah.

0:33:23.6 Melody Martinez: Yeah, I definitely think that's a big piece of it, is there has to be a willingness to say, "Hey, I don't know what I don't know, and I'm not expecting you to teach me that, but you can expect that I will believe that you are, like you said, a subject matter expert in your own experience." And so if that's what you're experiencing in the workplace or that's what you're struggling with, then it's on me to say, "I believe you," and try to support you as a mentor, try to support you, and try to do my own learning so that you don't have to explain everything to me just so I understand. I sometimes tell people... [chuckle] I tell my partner this a lot too. [chuckle] It's like, "You don't have to understand why, [laughter] you just have to believe me about this."

0:34:13.7 Katie Berlin: Yeah. [laughter] "You can't argue with me about what is going on in my own life. I don't wanna have to defend what I believe to you, about my own experience."

0:34:23.7 Melody Martinez: Yes.

0:34:24.0 Katie Berlin: Yeah.

0:34:24.6 Melody Martinez: Yes. Like, "I will tell you more later if you want to, but right now, just trust me on this."

0:34:29.6 Katie Berlin: Yes. [laughter] Absolutely, yeah, for sure. I identify with that. So venturing, a lot of people think, new graduates, we're talking about Tina Tran at the university, that students finding mentors as they enter a profession, so like a brand new tech school graduate or somebody's first day as a vet assistant, is mentoring just for new graduates or newly hired people?

0:34:58.7 Melody Martinez: No. No, Oh, I wish that more people understood that it's not, that it's really about anybody, at any... You can seek mentorship at any stage in your career, because there's something that you've identified that you want to know more about or learn more about yourself or become better at, but you need support for that. I think a lot of people also conflate... And we talk about this in the guidelines, they conflate mentorship with training, or mentorship with coaching. And those are all very distinct different things. And mentorship is really about the mentee identifying a place of growth for them. And so the only people mentorship does not work for is anyone who thinks that they have nothing to learn about themselves, about their profession, about anything.

0:36:00.9 Katie Berlin: We've all met this person.

0:36:02.9 Melody Martinez: Yeah. [laughter] Like, the person who thinks that they are self-made and they know everything and they don't need to know anything else, those are probably the people who need mentorship the most. [laughter]

0:36:15.1 Katie Berlin: I was gonna say, these are definitely not people you want as your mentor, because [laughter] they're definitely not open to learning from you. [laughter]

0:36:23.1 Melody Martinez: Yeah, 'cause they figured it out, they know how to do everything, right? I think mentorship is really about anyone at any stage of their journey. And it could be... We often think about mentorship is only about what you want to learn as a veterinarian, or as a technician, or as an assistant. It's not about... "And it has to be directly related to my job or my job description." And it's like, not necessarily. It could be related to your growth as a person, that might help you in your profession. Maybe you're having a hard time... Maybe you don't see yourself having a hard time necessarily communicating with your clients, but you want to improve your communication, just generally, you're struggling with that in your personal life maybe, and so you seek a mentor to help support you grow and learn around communication in general, and that supports you in your practice. But maybe that's not why you did it, and that's not why you sought a mentor. So mentorship could... Or maybe you're thinking of a career change, or you're wanting to work for industry, or you're leaving clinical, or you're trying to think of what to do next, and so you seek a mentor who's done that. And maybe that mentor has not done it exactly how you plan to do it, maybe they're not someone who was a doctor and went into industry, maybe they're a technician who...

0:37:56.0 Melody Martinez: You're a doctor, they're a technician who went into a completely different field and can just show a way of doing that, can help support you as you figure your way, right? And that's the thing is that mentors, I said that specifically, like, as you figure your way, 'cause mentorship is not about doing it my way, doing it the mentor's way. It's about the mentor helping the mentee figure out what is your way? What is your way of handling that challenge or learning more about that or learning more about yourself or taking something to the next step in your in your career? So I think that that's that's why it's important to understand that you might need

mentorship or you might desire mentorship at any stage in your in your life or your career. Yeah, it's and it's really relational. So it's I think it's important that that's that piece is important is that it's not about like you were saying earlier, like checking off some boxes and saying, Well, I did it, right? It's really relational. And so it's kind of it's not therapy, but it's kind of in that in that vein of like, it's relational, it's focused on you growing personally, professionally. And it depends, you may seek it out at a time where you feel like you you need something specific, right? Or you need a specific kind of support.

0:39:19.2 Melody Martinez: So it's not always for new grads, although it's beneficial for new grads to to have mentors. I mean, I've heard a million times over from veterinarians, especially, I wish I had had a mentor, my God, I wish I had, you know, because I was, it was sink or swim. I was just, you know, flying by the seat of my pants. And I wasn't ready after school, I wasn't ready to just go in, I needed, I had so many doubts about myself. Right? And it's, and a mentor could have totally supported, supported me. So it's definitely super helpful for new grads. But I think we miss out on a lot. And I think people undervalue themselves and undersell themselves when they don't think, you know, I'm midway through my career, or I've made it in my career, I don't need a mentor.

0:40:04.0 Melody Martinez: And it's like, well, maybe you do. It's just figuring out, what aspect of your professional life or your personal life Do you want support with, would you like to improve? Or it's not always about improvement, either. It's like, what do you want to learn more about yourself? And how can a mentor help you do that?

0:40:25.7 Katie Berlin: Yeah, I love all of that. And the idea that it's not, it's never too late to say, you know what, this is something I've struggled with my whole career. And I really, I feel like it's getting in the way of me being as happy as I could be and as effective as I could be in this career. And I want to stay here. So what can I do? Maybe I need some help. And asking for help is not always easy, especially when you feel like you should have it together. I think that's a big thing. Like, I'm just thinking about it now, if I went back into practice tomorrow, and I was like, you know what, I never really felt comfortable with emergency, I would really like to have a mentor who helps me like navigate the transition to emergency, you know, seeing emergencies as a GP. And it would be super humbling, because I would have to admit everything that I've been skating by not knowing for, for like over a decade in general practice, you know, and just got really lucky that it didn't go come in and nobody found out I didn't know it, like, we would have to say that out loud to somebody and then ask them for help with how to navigate those situations.

0:41:35.0 Katie Berlin: That is very hard. And so finding somebody who's not going to judge you and who recognizes your desire to, like you said, not always improve even but just learn is and admit, because we all have strengths and weaknesses, no matter like you said, nobody knows everything if they think they know everything, like they probably need this more than anyone. And it's okay to be human and admit that. But man, it is hard sometimes. You said.

0:42:07.8 Melody Martinez: Yeah, and I think.

0:42:09.5 Katie Berlin: Sorry.

0:42:10.6 Melody Martinez: That piece too about transitions, you said, like, during the transition, I think mentorship can be really valuable. That's why we focus so much on the new grad aspect of it can be really valuable for transitions. But that's not the only transition that exists. Right? There were

times where I remember gosh, now I'm thinking like, Oh, it would have been so great to have a mentor during this transition. That was not a physical transition from like one area of practice to another, but was like a philosophical transition. Like I was struggling with, I was like, with a moment of like moral distress about something related to the workplace. And I didn't know how to handle it.

0:42:49.6 Melody Martinez: And I was just like, like, it was just kind of not eating away at me. But I was just like, should I be working in veterinary medicine? If I have, if my values, if my values are changing, should I still be here? Is this profession, like the right place for me? If these are my, if my values are shifting in this way, and I'm seeing issues that cannot be like cannot be fixed overnight won't be fixed, probably in years within the profession? Is it time for me to go? And I was having am I even like, you know, veterinary medicine is such a big part of my identity. That it was like really distressing. That's a transition, even thinking about, wow, I've had a value shift, or I've had a different way of thinking about something, having a guide to someone who you can talk to, who's kind of been there or who maybe they haven't.

0:43:41.7 Melody Martinez: But as you're relating your story, they can kind of see things that maybe you've missed because you're so you're, you might be activated or you're so close to it. Right? Yeah, oh, man, I really wish I had had a mentor. I had a really good colleague who helped ground me was not my mentor, but helped ground me when I was having like a crisis moment about actually leaving clinical practice, right. And that was a really that would have been a really great moment to have leaned on a mentor, especially someone who already like, who knew me, right? Really well. And or had built a relationship with me prior to that moment when I found myself being like, Oh, no, this is crisis, right? It would have been really great to have someone to, to bounce ideas off of or to talk to someone to say, Hey, it's gonna be okay. Well, what does that mean for your career? What does that mean for you know, I just there's so many things that mentorship could have really helped me learn about myself, I think sooner With less activation That took me longer to get to. Like, I now understand that transition better today. I think I wouldn't have had to struggle so much if I had had a mentor.

0:45:07.5 Katie Berlin: I understand that and I thinking back, I think same, you know, there are, we've all been through some dark times, like of the soul. If you've worked in vet med long enough, you probably have been through some dark moments of the soul. And knowing that you're not alone in that moment. And like you said that somebody who you trust, and that's key, because you could post in an online forum, and thankfully, they're there, you know, when you need that in that moment, but those people don't know you, and they don't know all of the experiences that led to that moment. And, it's very hard for a stranger on the internet to give you meaningful advice in those really deep, dark moments. Where you're like, should I stay? What do I need to do to stay? Or like, if I go, will I be okay? What's missing in this situation? And, I thankfully have had some very good friends who have helped me do that, but it took a while to find them and I felt alone for a long time. And I wonder, you know, how much impact that has on your career over time. If you don't have that early on, does your career get shorter because of it? Because you've already chipped away at so much of your sort of resilience?

0:46:25.3 Melody Martinez: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, it's hard to know too. I'm like, hi, if I had had a mentor, would my path have been different? You know? It's like, you know, door A, door B, door C And I took door A I could have very easily ended up somewhere else. I guess we'll never know, but I also think that like, there's so many times where people struggle. You know, it's funny, we're just

talking about Dr. Tina Tren, she's not my mentor, she's a friend and I love her dearly. And I remember a few years ago, time is like a warp now. It's like maybe three years ago. How long ago.

0:47:04.9 Katie Berlin: Right. Three years ago Was 1997. Right.

0:47:08.0 Melody Martinez: Yeah, exactly. And I was actually thinking of going to vet school. I was like, I think I finally made my decision. I'm gonna be, you know, it was one of those techs that wanted to go to vet school, wanted to be a veterinarian. And I was like, I think I'm gonna go to vet school. Oh. I was literally, taking classes pre-reqs. Like I was, I was like, I gotta redo physics. It's been a long time. I gotta redo organic chemistry. It's been a long time. So Yeah., of course, those were the only classes I had left.

0:47:35.6 Katie Berlin: Right. Without the flashcards.

0:47:40.3 Melody Martinez: Yeah. Yeah. And so I was just like, I was in school. I had enrolled, I was actually in physics class, when I was talking to her and she was like, are you sure about this Melody? And I was like, what's not to be sure of? Don't you love your career? You know, she's like, well, yes, yes, yes, yes. But like, one of the things, and again, she's not my mentor, but she gave me some really sage advice, which she was like, I've gotten to know you over the last couple of years and I know what veterinary school is and I know where it leads, you know, and all the different places where it can lead. And she said, I don't think that this is where your strengths are. And, and not to say like you would, she was like, you'd be a great veterinarian.

0:48:20.2 Melody Martinez: Trust me, that is evident. But I just, you know, she said like, I, it's not, it's not in like a put down kind of way, but like, I see so much more for you. Not to say that veterinarian medicine, that being a veterinarian isn't like amazing. But she was just like, I just see a different path for you where I think that you could really be a part of this profession and support it in a different way. I think if you become a clinical veterinarian, there's something that's going, you're not gonna have time. You know, there's something that's going to be lost that I think that you actually uniquely bring because you're not a veterinarian.

0:48:52.3 Katie Berlin: Oh, I love that.

0:48:56.3 Melody Martinez: And I said, I said, well, really, and so she really made me think, she was like, really think about this. You know, really think about she's, and she's like, I'm, you know, she was saying to me like, I think that, that there are so many different pathways in this profession, but everyone seems to think that that's it.

0:49:10.9 Melody Martinez: Like, you have to become a veterinarian or you're nothing. And she's like, I'm glad I'm a vet, but you can be so many things and still there are so many things that we need in this profession. Some that have not even, she said some that were like, that have not even probably like, been realized yet, or like invented yet. Right. And she used the example of like veterinary social work. Like that is just still so new to the profession and so sorely needed and look at how new it is. Right. There could, there's that, you know, 'cause I was tossing that up. I was like, or maybe I'll go to school for social work and become a veterinary social worker. And she was like, well, you love people so and you like, why wouldn't you do that instead? You know?

0:49:53.2 Melody Martinez: And so she was, she was like, but then there are so many other things,

like we don't even know, like 10 years from now, we might realize that there's this other kind of auxiliary piece to the profession that's really needed That we don't have right now. In the same way that veterinary social work is really making itself is really showing, it's showing up in that way. And, you know, animal welfare being again, like kind of a sibling, industry, you know, profession that I've been a part of for a long time, that that's growing there too. And so, I don't know, she, that was like, that was really good advice. And you know what, again, she wasn't my mentor, but had she been, she is not someone who had the same life experience as I did. She is not someone who's even in the same role as me.

0:50:42.1 Melody Martinez: But she's someone who understands something that I was going towards better than I do. And that was what was really helpful with her advice is she's been there and she's seen it and she also knows me. And she said, Hey, like, I'm not saying, she never said don't, she never said don't do it. She said, think about what other options there are before you make a decision that that's a big one. Before you make that decision, try to consider some of these other options too. And give it time. Because you can always, that's not, like going to med school was not going away, you know? And so I really appreciated that because I think one of the things about ourselves is that we can become one, like one track line. Like that's the thing, that's the goal. Right. And having a mentor or someone giving you advice, and this happens obviously in mentorship, that can check you, that can check your beliefs. Well, she asked a lot of why, why is that the end goal? Tell me actually. She said, tell me why you want to become a veterinarian. And I think I said something like, I wanna help people. And she was like, don't become A veterinarian.

0:51:51.8 Katie Berlin: Well, there's so many other ways to do that, and I'm very glad that she asks these hard questions of you. And, I'm thinking about times when people have said that, you know, mentors are informal or otherwise have said that to me too, of like, why, you know, or tell me why you want to do that. Or, you know, what do you think about that idea? And then listening with an ear for like, the places that I might, the blind spots that I might have about it. And I really appreciate that, that honest perspective. And that is part of what, you know, you and the task force said in the guidelines about, radical candor, you know, about Yeah. That ability to have conversations with someone that are hard, but like, and Tina could have listened to you and then like you go girl, like go to vet school, you are like.

0:52:48.0 Melody Martinez: I was like really Encouraging.

0:52:48.6 Katie Berlin: Yeah. Because that's what friends do, right? Friends like encourage you to, and cheer you on and like, you know, make sure that they're a safety net when you're like, oh my God, what did I do ? Because everybody who's ever been to vet school has said that.

0:53:02.8 Melody Martinez: Yeah. No, I mean, everyone I had asked prior, like throughout my life who I'd asked, they discouraged me from going, I have been actively discouraged several times. So I was like, oh, no, not you too. I said, you're discouraging me. I said, shouldn't I be the kind of person who goes? And she's like, well, yes, yes, of course. But, I want you to really think about all the other opportunities because I think that you miss something. Or it's, it's so wonderful to have someone kind of give you a reality check. Right. And if I had answered her questions in a way where she was like, you should definitely go. Right. I think that she would've done that. But I think what she was, she was really deeply listening to me. And when I think back to that conversation, And I remember what she asked and, and what I said, I'm like, oh, she was, she was right.

0:53:56.5 Melody Martinez: Like I, I would've given myself the same advice had I heard what I was saying. Right. And so, you know, ultimately she wasn't like, oh, it's not that veterinarians don't help people, but I think at the heart of what you are looking for, it's probably not, you know, you're gonna spend a lot of time doing clinical things. And that's gonna take you away from the thing that is actually driving you in that direction and that thing that's driving you, you could actually have a really meaningful career. You could actually find happiness, but not be a doctor. You know, and I was like, well, you just saved me thousands of dollars.

0:54:33.8 Katie Berlin: Like, Literally.

0:54:36.1 Melody Martinez: So I really Appreciate your Advice.

0:54:37.0 Katie Berlin: Hundreds of Thousands of dollars. Like that was the most, that was the biggest bargain of the century was that conversation with Tina and I, I said this to her the other day. I can't remember. Oh, I remember what we were talking about. But I can't say it 'cause it's, it might be a thing later, but anyway. But I think I told her like, I couldn't, I didn't think I could love her anymore because she said something that was just amazing. And now I love her even more for this conversation that you had. So because I totally agree, like, you know, your perspective and the experience that's led you to where you are now and the work that you're doing now is so important. And it would be a shame if you had to set that part of you aside in order to be, seeing appointments all day. It's not that seeing appointments all day doesn't have just as much value. It's just, you're so strong in these areas and this is an area where we really need strong people, to help guide the profession in a good direction. So I'm very glad because you might not be here talking to me, and, that.

0:55:42.5 Melody Martinez: Exactly.

0:55:43.5 Katie Berlin: On a selfish level, I'm very glad that you are so.

0:55:47.1 Melody Martinez: I also think that, you know, it's like there's this thread, like, some people are, you know, I was not happy when I first heard her response.

0:55:56.9 Katie Berlin: Oh, right. 'cause you had your mind made up.

0:56:00.0 Melody Martinez: I was like, that's, yeah. I was like, that's not what I wanted to hear. You know, and I was like, frankly shocked. I was like, you didn't think I'd make a good, a good doctor? She was like, no, that's not it. She said, I was, I didn't like it. And sometimes your mentor, your mentee will say something that you disagree with. Right. And I think in that moment I just, I was like, what is, what is this trying, what is she trying to teach me right now by asking me these questions, by really getting to the heart of why I want something.

0:56:27.0 Katie Berlin: It's about the trust. Right?

0:56:29.4 Melody Martinez: Exactly. Exactly. Exactly. And so I was like, you know what, there's no rush. First of all. I mean, the first thing I heard was slow down. And, I think that that, I think sometimes I love that I don't have hype people who are just yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. All the time. Yes, you do. That encourage me all the time. Because the thing that's common between all the people who've said, no, don't do that, who are veterinarians. And I was like, do you just hate being a

vet? They don't. They just are like, they just see something in me that they're like, it's not really compatible with that particular career. It is compatible with the field. Just not there. We need you over here and you're, might this make you happy?

0:57:15.9 Melody Martinez: Explore that. Not saying don't go do this other thing prescriptively, but explore your strengths. Explore your areas of interest. Maybe they don't actually lead you in that direction. And I think that that's, I also have to take into account if this many people who've known me for a while and who I respect and who I trust are all saying the same, are all seeing similar things in me and saying the same thing. Maybe I should listen. Right? Maybe I should listen and at least take to heart what they're trying to tell me and believe it. 'Cause maybe they're seeing something they believe in me that I have not believed in about myself. And that's the value of friendships, mentorship... Whether it's informal or formal. Right. Is there are people who can see you in a way that you can't see yourself. And that helps you grow.

0:58:10.1 Katie Berlin: Yeah. And I love what you just said because I think, some people listening to this are like, well, what if she really wanted to go to vet school? Well if you'd really, really, really, really wanted to, you would've just done it. You would've been like, you know what, thank you all for your generous input. I'm going to vet school. And there's a, there's nothing about mentorship takes away your agency to do what you really want to do. That's not mentorship. If they're like, you can't do that, or I don't think you can do that. That's not mentoring. That's something else. That's...

0:58:47.3 Melody Martinez: Yeah. It's funny 'cause it sounded like discouragement at first I was like, you're discouraging me. And it's like, and now I'm like, that wasn't discouraging. That was just exploring. You might still end up there. Right. But let's explore some of these other options before you make a... Don't rush into it. Right. And so I thought that was really helpful. And I also think that it really helped me ground myself in being like, yes, being a technician who's not on the floor, is still a valuable identity. It's still valuable to have in this profession. It's still needed in this profession. Right. It's very rare for me to meet technicians who are not on the floor. And so I think what I heard there, it was kind of like, I was kind of like, what's my place if I'm not in the clinic? Right. And what everyone was saying was like, there are other things that you could be doing. And I think one of the things Tina said was like, again, with that, maybe your path isn't written yet. Maybe the thing you end up doing, you invent. Have you ever thought about that? And I was like, oh, that's exciting. That sounds really exotic. I like it.

0:59:58.2 Katie Berlin: Yeah. And then you're like, I should be dreaming bigger.

1:00:02.8 Melody Martinez: Well what, that's what's really valuable about sometimes "being discouraged." Right? Is that it allows you to find something else. And yeah, I don't know. It's like I look back now on leaving the clinical setting. It... For a long time I saw it as a failure. And I look at it now as like, oh my gosh, look at everything I learned from that decision. Who I've become and how I returned. Knowing what I know now, but at the time it was like the worst possible thing that could ever possibly happen.

1:00:39.4 Katie Berlin: Yeah. Oh my gosh.

1:00:40.0 Melody Martinez: I didn't wanna be a statistic. I didn't, that was a thing to me is I didn't wanna be a statistic. I didn't wanna be the technician who's here for eight, 10 years and then like it's

not for me anymore. I was fighting against that and then I realized, you're still one, even if you're not... You're still a veterinarian if you don't work clinically. Right. It just, I think that those stories aren't out there enough that I think many of us lose perspective and then struggle unnecessarily, thinking that like, I've lost a part of myself or I have to grieve a part of myself. It's like you can be that person, you can still be the vet, you can still be the tech or the assistant and not be working there and still have that identity and utilize it in a completely different way or not at all for a time if you need to.

1:01:29.3 Melody Martinez: Right. Doesn't make you, yeah. I don't know. That's a whole other conversation, but I think it's the value of even informal mentorships. And I wouldn't classify this conversation with Tina as an informal mentorship either, but just, having someone who knows you or who's gotten to know you, or who's just getting to know you and can ask you the right questions so that you can come to the answers that are meaningful for you. Right. Yeah. And it's, again, doesn't have to be the same identity, doesn't have to be like all... Tina and I are different. Right. And it was just, again, it's someone who can say, I understand, I believe you. Let me listen to you and here's what I think or here's what I'm seeing. How does, what do you, she actually said like, what do you think about that? And I was like, oh, I don't know. I had never thought of that before.

1:02:23.8 Katie Berlin: She was probably kinda, I mean I would imagine that she was probably kind of like, I don't know how she's gonna take this, but I'm gonna say it. It was just like...

1:02:31.4 Melody Martinez: Yeah. She was.

1:02:34.8 Katie Berlin: Because she cares about you.

1:02:35.8 Melody Martinez: She was like, I know how this sounds.

1:02:39.4 Katie Berlin: Yeah. I mean that's really, really cool. And I wanna be respectful of your time and so I wanna close out here with just the, when we talked on the phone before this, we had an epic zoom call. It was amazing. It was, I think we had like 30 minutes scheduled. We were on for an entire afternoon. It was amazing. It was a great conversation. And you said like, you dropped all these nuggets, some of which I wrote down 'cause they were just too good. And one of them you said that you want people to know or you want people to take away that, I believe what you said was before you say it's not possible, think what would it look like if it were possible? And that applies to so many things, in your conversation with Tina, well, what do you mean? I should not go to vet school and think about doing something else with my life. Wait a second. What could that look like and how could you live that life and have it be an even fuller life? And you applied this to mentoring too, that a mentorship is not one size fits all and a mentor has to be open to arrangements that maybe are not exactly what they had in mind when they were like, I think I wanna be a mentor. Right?

1:04:00.8 Melody Martinez: Yeah. Yep. I think people have a lot of preconceived ideas of what that relationship looks like. And I think that sometimes that puts unnecessary pressure on the mentor. In particular, I have to be available all the time. I have to be able to give them advice about everything and if I don't know, then I have to be able to figure it out. Right. Or, and it's just like, if you don't know, say you don't know. Or let me find someone who can help you with that. That's not my area of expertise. I'm actually working on that myself. Right. Let's find a resource together that helps us understand this challenge that you're facing. Yeah. I think, I don't remember saying that. It

sounds so cool now.

1:04:42.7 Katie Berlin: It was cool. It's cool enough I wrote it down in my little book, you didn't know I was taking notes while we were talking.

1:04:49.6 Melody Martinez: No, I didn't. I said, yeah. I think where that comes from is that, especially in my work now and I see it now kind of like retrospectively in veterinary medicine too. It's this like, no one's ever done that before. We can't do that or we don't have the resources. I see it a lot in my work, with organizations around not just DI just even like organizational policies in particular, benefits that they would wanna offer for their staff. We don't have the money or we can't do that. Or if we do, I've seen it in organizations I've worked in for example, where it's like, oh well if we make this decision or if we publicly communicate that to our audience, we're gonna lose donors or we're gonna lose clients or we're gonna, right.

1:05:39.7 Melody Martinez: And so what if you don't though? What if you make that decision and something good happens or something unexpected happens, it's not the worst case scenario. And so I tell a lot of people I work with, I said, it seems impossible now, but that, the more you think that thing is impossible, the less you actually try to think creatively of how it could be possible. Right. Or maybe you think the only way this is possible is one way, I've gotta do it this way. Right? And that's, it's a mind block. And it really, just having that kind of mindset puts you... It makes it so that you don't explore the what ifs or what if we did it this or what if this was possible. So I tend not to do that myself.

1:06:32.3 Melody Martinez: I try not to, I try to check myself when I'm thinking, oh, this is the only way. And I think that, or this is impossible, especially organizations. Oh, it's impossible. We don't have the budget to offer sabbaticals. That's wild. How could we ever do that? We don't. So, okay. So if you say that we don't and we can't, then you'll never. Right. You won't even consider what could be possible. So it's looking at, okay, this is the budget we have or this is what we have to work with. How do we maneuver that? Or how over time, doesn't have to be perfect. What's a different way that we could offer something similar, that we could do something similar? Maybe it doesn't have to look like that thing that we thought it was gonna look like, but maybe it could be just enough.

1:07:19.7 Melody Martinez: And I just, I don't want people to stop thinking creatively about what could be possible. I think in my conversation with Tina, I mean that's what she did. She was like, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. What else is possible? Maybe there's something that doesn't exist yet. And it was just that nugget of questioning that allowed me to be like, it just opened my mind up to other things and it helped me slow down and it helped me reevaluate and reexamine things. Right. And I think mentors in particular, that's a, the power of a really good mentor is being able to get you to explore your own way of thinking, how you think something should be done or I'm leaning towards this. Do you see it differently? Something I say to a lot of people say like, well here's what I think, but do you see it differently? 'Cause I'm genuinely curious, maybe there's something I missed. Right. And I think that that, I don't know, it's just opening yourself up to possibility. And I tell people all the time, especially in organizations, I was like, well, how about we pilot that because everyone, oh, if we do then it's, that's it. The decision has been made. And I'm like, Ooh, not many things in life are that...

1:08:33.4 Katie Berlin: One and done. Then it's forever.

1:08:35.4 Melody Martinez: One and done. Yeah, exactly. That's what they used to say about marriages...

1:08:40.1 Katie Berlin: Nope.

1:08:41.1 Melody Martinez: That didn't turn out that way. Right. So like, it's not, I always tell people like, pilot it, why don't you try... Try that for three months, see how it fits, see if it works, reevaluate it. If it doesn't, let it go or try something else. Maybe you learn something about yourself or your organization, along the way, just try it out. Right. And I think it's basically saying like, take calculated risks. And don't limit yourself by saying it's not possible. We're, I think we're here today, many of us because so many people didn't think things were impossible. Right. So I think that that's, I think that that's, I don't know. It's something I said and it's not something I've necessarily, it's not a motto I have, but I just...

1:09:32.3 Katie Berlin: Maybe it will be now.

1:09:33.4 Melody Martinez: I always think to my, yeah, maybe it will be now, but I always think to people like, Hey, don't be self-limiting. Right. Try and figure out special organizational culture stuff. Oh, it's not possible for us to, well what if it is right? Or how could it be, how could it be, how could we make it happen if we had the resources? Or how do we do that with the resources we do have? How do we get close? Right. Success just might look differently than you had planned.

1:10:04.3 Katie Berlin: Yes.

1:10:05.5 Melody Martinez: I think that's a, I'm gonna watch this podcast someday, and I'm, I hope you don't cut that part because I know someday I will need to be reminded that success sometimes doesn't look how we had planned.

1:10:16.4 Katie Berlin: Absolutely. And I think I'm gonna have a guest on soon that actually I will have talked to you by the time we have this by the time this podcast goes out. But that's one of the things that she talks about is, what happens when you, when success doesn't look like you thought it was going to. Which is a really interesting question. But we were talking before this about how neither of us can watch ourselves on video. I would never watch these podcasts back. I just listen, to review and, so I can send you the transcript and then you could just face it up on your screen.

1:10:50.1 Melody Martinez: I will.

1:10:51.8 Katie Berlin: Yeah. You could do a post-it.

1:10:53.5 Melody Martinez: Remember this. Yeah.

1:10:57.2 Katie Berlin: Well...

1:10:57.8 Melody Martinez: It'll be important to me someday I'm sure. I'll be like, oh, I should take my own, again like we started, with this conversation's going in circles now, get to know yourself.

1:11:06.8 Katie Berlin: Yep, totally.

1:11:07.5 Melody Martinez: Before you go in, you enter into that relationship and maybe it'll be myself giving myself that advice in the future. And I was like, Hmm, I should trust myself more on that. So, yeah...

1:11:17.6 Katie Berlin: Well...

1:11:18.2 Melody Martinez: Sometimes these things they have their way.

1:11:21.4 Katie Berlin: They do.

1:11:22.8 Melody Martinez: Finding themselves back to you.

1:11:24.5 Katie Berlin: I think it's important to note that not everybody who has, you have so many amazing things to say and contribute. And also you probably don't remember them yourself all the time. And that's important to know. No mentor is ever going to remember all of their advice themselves either. So, you don't have to be perfect to make a huge impact in somebody's life. And that's a really, really important takeaway too. Melody, thank you so much. I think we're doing well because I think our last conversation is twice this long. So, we're doing well, but it's 'cause we had a vague outline, probably so, but I could talk to you forever. I could listen to you forever. I really appreciate you spending so much time and dedicating yourself so intensely to all of the things that you care so much about. So thank you so much for being here.

1:12:16.9 Melody Martinez: Thank you so much for having me. Thanks for emailing me.

1:12:20.3 Katie Berlin: Thank you for not deleting it.

1:12:20.7 Melody Martinez: I will, yeah, I believe you. I didn't say, are you sure you have the right person?

1:12:25.9 Katie Berlin: Yeah. And then, I wanted to ask you one more thing, which is, if our listeners want to learn more about you or ask you about consulting, where can they find you?

1:12:35.4 Melody Martinez: Yes, they can find me at my website, which is work with acorde, which acorde is the word for chord in Spanish. Play on my name, but it's workwith A-C-O-R-D-E.com. And, at the MCVMA website, which is mcvma.org. We love people to join us and, help us do good work in this field.

1:13:00.2 Katie Berlin: Absolutely. I'll put those links in the show notes too. So...

1:13:04.9 Melody Martinez: Thank you.

1:13:05.9 Katie Berlin: Definitely check more out about Melody. And thanks to all of you for listening. You can check out the 2023 AHA mentoring guidelines now at aha.org/mentoring. So please head over and do that and we'll catch you next time on Central Line.