

Central Line: The AAHA Podcast Transcript

Episode Title: Mindfulness for People Who Hate that Word

Guest: Patty Casebolt

0:00:00.3 Katie Berlin: Hi, everyone. Before we get into this week's episode, our guest, Patty Casebolt, just wanted to make sure that we let you know that we're going to be talking about mindfulness and meditation in this conversation, and those things can have enormous health benefits for a lot of people, even in small doses.

But there are some individuals who may have a mental health diagnosis, or who have experienced trauma, who may find that the practice of mindfulness or meditation can bring up some increased anxiety or negative emotions. She always recommends, if you feel like you fall into one of those categories, that you consult a healthcare practitioner you trust before beginning. We will be taking a mindful moment at the end of this episode, so feel free to skip it today if you feel like you want to check with a healthcare provider first. But I hope you'll get a lot out of this episode. I had a fantastic time talking to Patty and I hope you'll enjoy it too.

0:01:03.0 Katie Berlin: Hi. Welcome back to Central Line. I'm your host, Dr. Katie Berlin, and my guest today is Patty Casebolt. Patty is coming to us from outside of veterinary medicine, although she has interacted with us weirdos in vet med before - so this isn't her first experience into the world of vet med.

And we also have my little buddy, Franklin, here today. (I'm holding up my Chihuahua for those of you listening and not watching.) So if you hear a strange creaking noise, that's him snoring. I'm just going to put that disclaimer out there at the beginning. Patty, thank you so much for joining us. I'm really excited to be talking to you today.

0:01:38.5 Patty Casebolt: Thank you so much, Katie. I enjoy being here.

0:01:41.3 KB: Before we start, I'll just mention that Patty is here because we are working with CareCredit to bring you today's episode and several others this season, and the team at CareCredit are the ones who introduced us. I'm very grateful for that because I think there's so much we can learn from you and from each other by looking outside of our respective fields. So I'm also very excited about that.

I think we tend to get in our little bubbles, and it's a really good thing to be talking to people outside our immediate circle. So I just wanted to thank CareCredit for making that happen. Patty, would you just give us a little background about who you are and what you do, and how it is you came to be talking to me today?

0:02:21.6 PC: Sure. Excellent. Thanks, Katie. I'm a COO at Medical Eye Center, which is a pretty large ophthalmology practice in Medford, Oregon, and Grants Pass, in southern Oregon. I've been here 32 years.

I started as a technician, so I've been on the clinic side, and I've been in management for a really long time. But I'll tell you, Katie, the path that brought me here is most likely what a lot of people, especially in healthcare, deal with, which is stress. I developed some pretty serious health-related illnesses, several of them. And it wasn't until, I don't know, maybe 10 years ago that my doctor

recommended that I get into mindfulness and meditation as a way to help, because mainstream medicine wasn't helping. And it was a dramatic change. I am symptom-free. And I was so impressed that I continued my journey and became certified as a mindfulness meditation coach. And so, yeah, I'm here now and I am a huge believer and I'm excited to share this information with everyone today.

0:03:29.7 KB: I'm so glad that you said that. That rings true for me this year, for sure, after having had some very strange neurologic symptoms pop up seemingly out of nowhere. All the tests are coming back normal and they're telling me that it could be stress-related. I have to admit that mindfulness and meditation are... I'm very dedicated when it comes to exercise and to try to eat well and all that, but I have a hard time with things that require me to be still.

0:04:01.2 PC: I diagnosed myself as an A+++ personality type - *so* driven. And I work ridiculous hours, and my family calls me a workaholic. I need help. But I have discovered, I want to share with you today, how someone like me, maybe someone like you, can work in mindfulness.

So if you're thinking it's sitting on a cushion for 20 minutes or half an hour, that's not what we're talking about today. That's great if someone wants to do that, but really, this is more for the working person who wants to find more manageable ways to work in mindfulness throughout the day, those micro-moments and pause.

0:04:41.2 KB: I love that. So everybody listening, if you are like me and you hear the words mindfulness or meditation and you're like, "Mm, not for me. I like to run really hard or jump up and down when I need energy or push harder instead of taking a minute or more to be still," then I encourage you to stick around because I think this is very helpful for people like me - to hear ways that we can do this without feeling like we have to completely change who we are and how we go about life.

0:05:12.3 PC: Right. Yeah.

0:05:14.8 KB: So before we get started talking about that, I like to know a little bit about our guests on a personal level, and I'm trying to find new ways to do that as we progress through these episodes. I was at this restaurant a couple of weeks ago, this biscuit restaurant, and instead of taking your name, they ask you a question. There's a question of the day, and then they use your answer to call out your order when it's ready. And their question was, "What would the title of your autobiography be?"

I thought that was a great question because you can learn a lot about someone that way. So Patty, what would the title of your autobiography be?

0:05:53.3 PC: Gosh, that's a tough one. I think about this sometimes. I was actually asked this a few months ago, and I came up with two... Can I have two?

0:06:02.6 KB: Sure. A second edition.

0:06:04.7 PC: Second edition. That's right. It's something like the joy was in the journey, and...

0:06:13.6 KB: Love it.

0:06:13.7 PC: My aunt told me once that if you race through your life, you're just racing towards your gravestone. And to slow down and smell the roses. So for me, I've discovered that finding joy is actually in every moment of the journey.

0:06:28.4 KB: Love that.

0:06:28.6 PC: And then I think the second one I chose would be, "She followed her heart and discovered her gypsy soul." I always call myself a closet hippie, because on the outside I'm this very professional mainstream person. And yet inside, there's something that really appeals to me about living this free spirit life. Right?

0:06:49.5 KB: Those are lovely, and I think a lot of people can probably relate. Especially the last couple of years when I think a lot of people have realized that they didn't have to stay put. And I love also that you've been working at the same company for 32 years, and you still see yourself as constantly changing and having that gypsy soul.

0:07:14.3 PC: Absolutely, yeah. Lifelong learning is important to stimulate a heart.

0:07:18.6 KB: Yep.

0:07:19.2 PC: Be passionate.

0:07:21.0 KB: Yep. Love it. Okay. Well, I do feel like I know something about you now. And those are beautiful. So let's get into it.

First of all, I think, like I said, it's really important that sometimes we'll see people in veterinary medicine sort of feeling antagonistic about people in human health care because they feel like people equate us and it's not the same. Or they feel like people don't treat us with the same respect that they treat human health care professionals. And I don't love that contentious nature of that conversation. I really think there's so much we could learn from each other.

And because human medicine and human health care have probably more resources dedicated to them in terms of research and things that affect our well-being as professionals, I think we should pay attention and think about the ways that we might be alike versus the ways that we're different. I do think that's really important and something that, at least, it seems like we're starting to have more conversations about. In your opinion, do you see similarities between what we're going through? What you know about what we're going through in veterinary medicine from a well-being perspective, and what's happening in human health care?

0:08:33.7 PC: Absolutely, Katie. I think for both industries, especially these last two years since the pandemic, the challenges of being short-staffed, the resources, very, very limited. Owners in the veterinary world just seem like their coping mechanisms are very diminished. So I think to be a provider and then to be dealing with the challenges of how to come across in an empathetic way while under all of this stress is very challenging.

And, well, Katie, I knew we were going to do this podcast today, and I saw an article last week that was from Kaiser Health News. And it was actually about the veterinarian world. The title was, "It's

not just physicians and nurses, veterinarians are burning out too."

And it talked about how during the pandemic, 23 million families adopted pets. And the fact that there were more people who were working at home, so they paid more attention to their pets. So they noticed maybe illnesses or symptoms that required them to bring their pets in to be seen. And this onslaught of new pet owners, or maybe new symptoms that haven't been treated before, created even more demand on veterinarians. And the other thing it talked about was the fact that some people just really can't afford the care, and so were choosing to euthanize their pets. So as a veterinarian, being faced with that dilemma of knowing that you can help this poor creature, and yet the human part is saying no - that onslaught of additional stress has really impacted the veterinarian industry.

0:10:31.7 KB: I think it's called moral distress, where you know you can do something to help and your hands are tied in some way from being able to do it. And in vet med that is a daily occurrence especially for people like emergency vet teams. I do think that contributes a lot. And I have wondered how that is different for human health practitioners who at least generally have more resources to help, but also though they're helping humans who can be notoriously difficult to help because they don't necessarily want to help themselves.

0:11:11.7 PC: Well. Exactly. I mean, humans have more choice. They have a voice and they can communicate in a way that we can understand. And so even if they do choose to not pursue medical treatment... I've certainly seen it in our office. We see about 250 patients a day, so a lot of people coming through the door. And not everybody chooses to move forward with their health in a positive way. I've heard it from my own providers of just how frustrating that is.

0:11:48.2 KB: Yeah, absolutely.

0:11:48.3 PC: I'm not a provider like you, but what can providers do, what can their staff do to deal with this increased stress that's an onslaught every single day? How can we minimize that in the best way that we can?

0:12:12.9 KB: Well, one of the ways that was recommended to you, and now you feel so strongly about that you want to pass it on to everyone that you can, is mindfulness and meditation. Again, not something I've historically stuck to. I've heard the same thing from a lot of people. And yet it seems like all the really, really successful people that I know or I've heard of, or who write books about success, all seem to have some kind of mindfulness practice. Do you have like a 30 to 60 second elevator pitch or something, when you can see people start to switch off when you talk about it, that you use to persuade them to stick around for a little bit longer and learn more?

0:12:58.3 PC: Yeah. Mental health is as important as the rest of our body, if not more important. So there's the health aspect, and then asking someone if they see themselves as a leader, because whether they're a leader at home, as a parent or they're a CEO or they're owner of a clinic, we're all leaders in our own right. And there has been so much research on mindfulness and meditation and how that can improve leadership skills.

In fact, I'm reading a book right now called *Becoming A Better Leader Through Mindfulness*. It's talking about finding that space to lead and that as a leader, if I have a presence that is grounded, I'm going to be a better leader than if I'm emotionally unregulated throughout the day.

0:13:46.4 KB: Well, that makes perfect sense, because I know my stress level gets up high and then I tend to be short tempered and that never makes for a good leader.

0:13:56.5 PC: Absolutely.

0:13:57.6 KB: Can you tell us about what the difference is between mindfulness and meditation? I know we often use them interchangeably.

0:14:03.1 PC: Absolutely. Yeah. There are many different definitions if you Google it. I like going back to the person who really coined the term mindfulness. Mindfulness is a state of being, if you just think about that, and meditation is a tool to achieve that. Jon Kabat-Zinn was really the person who's kind of like the father of mindfulness, and this is his definition. He says that mindfulness is the awareness that arises through paying attention on purpose in the present moment non-judgmentally, so that means as you become aware of what's going on for you in this present moment, you're not judging yourself for that awareness – and the mind is an amazing time traveling machine.

If you think about that, I mean, how often we spend time in the past, really regretting things or ruminating on things that we did, wish that we had done differently, or we can time travel to the future and worry about all the things that could be possible. Like I'm a great catastrophizer.

0:15:17.6 KB: Same.

0:15:18.4 PC: And that's just energy that goes away, when you really think about how much energy you spend at any given time that is not in this present moment. In fact, I was reading an article a few years ago from the *Harvard Business Review* that talked about studies they had done. And at any given moment, 49% of the time, we are not in this present moment - that's almost 50%.

So if you think about ways in which you could minimize that number, how much more effective we would all be if we were actually right here, rather than time traveling around, right? Meditation is just simply a tool. That's one tool - it's possible to be mindful without actually meditating. And I think that's the part that most people get confused. They think that they're one and the same and they're actually different.

Meditation is a tool or a practice that helps an individual use a technique that trains their brain, it trains their attention to become aware of this present moment and achieve a mentally clear and emotionally calm and stable state. It's really about wiring the two halves of the brain, the prefrontal cortex, which is the executive problem solving part of our brain, and the amygdala, the emotional part - fight, flight, freeze. When we are becoming defensive or scared or any kind of emotional response, most of us go right to that amygdala part, not problem solving. And the wonderful thing about mindfulness is they've shown in studies - we can talk about that here more in a little bit - how those two regions of the brain actually wire together, and therefore I'm able to be more emotionally regulated, and access that problem solving part of my brain, real time, in the moment when I need it most.

0:17:12.6 KB: I'm really glad you mentioned that. That makes so much sense - that mindfulness is that judgment free awareness, whereas meditation is actually like an intentional sort of exercise,

brain exercise.

0:17:23.3 PC: Right.

0:17:26.5 KB: And that that's useful for me, like the difference between movement and exercise.

0:17:31.5 PC: Well, and I also think, Katie, I think this is so true. Everyone I've ever experienced in the veterinary industry has an amazing amount of empathy. I know that's true in healthcare, people in healthcare as well. But I do think that for the industry as a whole, in the veterinary world, I think that's a value, a high value of being empathetic. And one of the reasons I think that mindfulness is so important to increase empathy is that the difference between sympathy and empathy is, sympathy is I can relate to what's going on for you, but empathy is I'm actually feeling it myself.

And the problem with empathy can be if I really allow myself to be in the same space as you emotionally, now we're both in the trench, right? So there's this kind of one off layer of compassion versus true empathy, where now I have access to my problem solving part of the brain and I'm not in the amygdala, and I'm feeling all the emotions with you. And that's where mindfulness really helps me bring up that resource of still being empathetic and feeling with you, and yet kind of being that resource for you that I can help problem solve despite what's going on for you emotionally.

0:18:50.0 KB: That's interesting too. We don't think very often about the difference between empathy and compassion, about being able to understand what someone's going through without putting yourself in that situation and feeling all those feelings, because that is so exhausting.

0:19:03.6 PC: Absolutely.

0:19:06.0 KB: And kind of makes me wonder if we should call it empathy fatigue instead of compassion fatigue.

0:19:09.3 PC: It's true. It's true. There's another great book called *The Arts of Empathy* that I read. I work with a lot of patients who have really received devastating news about their eyesight, and what I was noticing for myself is absolute fatigue. At the end of the day, it just being... Almost feeling depressed, and what I noticed through doing so much mindfulness and meditation is I was able to tap into a resource that I hadn't been before, and although I was still feeling what was going on for them, I was able to... Like the oxygen mask, when they tell you in the plane to put it on yourself first before anyone else, it's one and the same thing. I'll be able to show up every day, at my best, and therefore, be helpful for other people.

0:19:58.5 KB: You had mentioned a few minutes ago about some studies that they have done to show the changes that actually happened from a regular meditation practice. Can you talk a little bit more about that? Because I know we have a very evidence-based audience.

0:20:13.9 PC: Absolutely.

0:20:14.4 KB: For the most part, we love data.

0:20:15.9 PC: No, and I get that, because I am the same, I'm a little bit of a skeptic. Even though,

like I say, I'm a closet hippie, I still am very much mainstream, I want to know the data. The first time I was introduced to this was at a mindfulness summit at UC Berkeley many years ago, and they talked about a study that had been done in 2008 at the University of New York, and it's where they took Tibetan monks and they were doing functional MRIs (fMRI) and looking at how their brains were firing under stressful situations. And what they discovered is that instead of that switching, like we were talking about, going from the prefrontal cortex back to the amygdala, they noticed that these monks were able to maintain activity in both sides of their brain, and they found that that was highly unusual. For most people that just doesn't happen.

And the studies were expanded - Harvard took part in this study, and the biggest study was done at University of Wisconsin, Madison. They did an eight-week study where they took long-term meditators and people who had never meditated, and they put them through a study for eight weeks, and what they noticed is at four weeks, they still hadn't seen a big difference between the non-meditators, but at eight weeks, the brains of the people who had not ever meditated were working the same as those who had meditated their whole lives, and they were astounded at the results. And they have done several other studies that have confirmed these results.

Now, it's kind of a good news/bad news situation. Because of the neuroplasticity of the brain, they were finding it was wiring itself together, those two regions through a minimum of eight weeks. However, for those who stop meditating, the wiring goes back. So just like exercise - which I admit that I'm not the best at an ongoing exercise routine - what I have found through my life now is that if I stop meditating, I will go back to this kind of unregulated emotional response versus even under a very stressful situation, if I've been meditating routinely, I'm often surprised at my internal response that I feel calm and collected and able to respond in a reasonable way rather than an unregulated way.

0:23:03.9 KB: That is fascinating, and for somebody like me who likes to find goals, I can think, "Okay, I could probably say, I'm going to try this for eight weeks." I could probably do that because it has a beginning and an end, and then I can say, "Okay, if I don't feel any different at eight weeks, maybe I could give myself permission to change something or stop." But if there's a good chance that during that eight weeks, something will change and the wiring can start to shift, and that is not a very long time.

0:23:36.4 PC: Right. I don't know if your listeners have ever heard of Dr. Dan Siegel, the Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at UCLA's School of Medicine. He's written many books, especially on child psychology, but he has really put effort into proving this. It started off as a theory, and now it has been proven time and again in these studies, but he's fond of saying, "Where attention goes, neural firing flows and neural connection grows."

He likes to say that quote a lot, and it really struck me about that thinking about the neurons rewiring themselves together as a physical thing. It's not just a woo-woo thought that this is maybe more psychosomatic, it's truly happening. And I think for you, Katie, and others, journaling or making note as you go along on this journey for eight weeks and noticing for yourself if you really see a difference.

0:24:41.7 KB: That is true. We hear a lot about intention now, to set your intention for the day and how's it going to be, and I know that at least when I was in full-time practice, I would set my intention for the day to be, "Okay, I'm going to be Zen. I'm just going to take each thing as it comes,

and I'm not going to overreact and I'm going to breathe before I talk," and then I would get to work. And it's like before I even put my purse down, somebody was asking me a question and that all just went instantly out the window.

0:25:09.9 PC: Yeah.

0:25:11.6 KB: So it sounds like you kind of have to make it muscle memory a little bit, that if you keep up these practices that maybe you can train yourself so that when you initially would want to just react, your brain is able to do that thinking for you and say, "Okay, put the brakes on for just one second."

0:25:28.8 PC: And what you're saying now reminds me, Katie, about learning to breathe in a way that is effective. Because most of us - I didn't know this until I was actually in physical therapy after an injury - breathe in the top part of our lungs, shallow quick breaths, especially under stress, but we may not learn how to breathe effectively. And so one thing that people can do is just simply to put one hand on their chest, one hand on their belly, and to take a deep breath and to see if their hand on their belly expands. You can also put your hand on your belly and your hand on your lower back and take a deep breath and see if your hand on your belly expands.

In order to oxygenate ourselves, it really takes that full breath and learning to breathe down into the belly, because if you're like me, my whole life, I've held my belly in.

0:26:32.7 KB: We're trained from a very young age, especially women, to do that.

0:26:36.9 PC: Right, exactly. And all we've done is train our abdominal muscles to hold ourselves in, and if you've ever looked at a belly dancer, for instance, their bellies kind of pooch out, because they're using their bellies in a different way. Not that if you start breathing into your belly, your belly is going to pooch out. That's not what I'm saying. But you will start learning to breathe in a more effective way and that will calm you very soon, it doesn't take too many breaths to really experience a shift.

0:27:09.2 KB: Yeah, that's definitely true. I've noticed I'm a chest breather, not a belly breather most of the time, like I'm sure most of us are, like you said.

So, all right, well, let's get into then - what can we do? Regardless of our role in the hospital or what our day is looking like, or how busy we are, do you have some tips for how anybody can start to incorporate mindfulness into their day?

0:27:36.0 PC: I do. I have a prescription for stress reduction or just more effective leading or however you want to frame it. There are ways, these micro-moments that you don't have to sit on a cushion for 30 minutes a day to achieve, kind of what you were saying, Katie, this Zen-like feeling inside.

So, it starts with - you've already mentioned it - setting an intention in the morning, so as soon as you wake up, you're asking yourself, "What is my intention for the day?" And that's very different than a goal. A goal is action, actually moving towards something. Rather, intention is more open-ended and non-judgmental, so maybe my intention today is to create micro-moments throughout the day, maybe that's all my intention is, that I'm going to take care of myself in that way.

And then throughout the day, I just continue to remind myself, "What was my intention when I woke up this morning?" And it can be the same. One thing I've learned about setting intentions is it doesn't necessarily have to be a different intention every morning. You might decide what your intention is going to be this entire week, and sometimes that's even more helpful to get that ingrained and experience that side.

0:28:53.3 KB: Also it takes the pressure off of having to say, "What was my intention... " And then suddenly you are stressed out about setting an intention. Which is not the point.

0:29:01.0 PC: That's exactly right. That becomes a goal instead of an intention. So, the next thing would be in the morning when you're eating breakfast and maybe drinking your coffee, doing so in a mindful way. It means taking a moment to really pay attention, because remember, mindfulness is about being in this present moment. Putting the phone away, putting the screen time down and really absorbing what it feels like, using all five senses - what does my breakfast smell like? What does it taste like? What's the texture? What does it sound like? Am I crunching or...?

And it might sound silly, but it is a way of becoming present without any complicated tools, that's one thing, and that's kind of easing you into your morning as a micro-moment. The next thing is, on your drive in to work, take a different route. When we go to work every day, I'm sure you're probably like me, where I somehow ended up at work and had no idea how I got there.

0:30:09.1 KB: Oh yeah. For sure.

0:30:09.7 PC: So if you force yourself to take a different route, your brain is forced to be more present, to pay attention. The other thing, I love this one, is breathing into the belly at the stop lights. So any time you stop for a red light, just breathe into your belly, pay attention to your breath, until a green light happens, and that's a way of becoming present, very easy.

0:30:35.1 KB: That's something that as a person who's chronically five minutes later than I wanted to be, I have had to do intentionally many times because I'm sitting there at the red light or behind the train that's taking forever or whatever. And without breathing, I'd be screaming and pounding the steering wheel. So, doing that on purpose, before you get to that level, sounds even better.

0:30:57.6 PC: Definitely - control the adrenaline rush, the cortisol spike. The next is walking meditation, and you can do this at your lunch break, but I like to start when I come from the parking lot into the building. Literally paying attention to how my foot is falling on the ground, where my weight is transferring from the ball of my foot to the heel, then looking, and what am I noticing? Sometimes you can say what are five new things that I've noticed just from the parking lot in.

Because again you could get into autopilot, just lock in and be thinking about my first meeting or that report that was due last night that I didn't finish. You're forcing, again, that presence and using all five senses, so what do I smell? What am I hearing? What am I seeing? Maybe even, what does the air taste like? It doesn't seem like you could taste the air, but if you pay attention, there are subtleties, right? And then as you are walking into the building, ask yourself, "What is my purpose for being here?"

We talked about this earlier, Katie. What is your purpose for why you became a veterinarian? To

remind yourself of that is helpful to get out of the, maybe, resentful space of, "Oh my gosh, I'm just working so many hours and I feel out of control. My staff aren't showing up, or..." All of the negatives that like anybody, I can ruminate over and just get obsessed with. Going back to the original, "Why am I here? What do I want to give back? In what way is helpful?"

The other thing about doors - doors can be a real key, any time you pass through a door. So if you're coming into the office, the door is a moment to pause and remind yourself as you go in that door, three things: What are my thoughts right now, in my head? In my body, what are the sensations that are present right now? And then in my heart, what are emotions that are present right now? And that's another way of bringing yourself a micro-moment, right? Just a quick check in, how am I doing in those three areas? The mind/the head, the body, the heart.

The other thing that you can do throughout the day is start meetings with a mindful minute. In our office, with our management team, any time we start a meeting, we have this little device you can buy on Amazon that records music. And we've recorded a minute of music, and we play that in the background and we all breathe together. And it allows us to become present into this meeting right now, because most of us are running from one thing to the next. And it's just lovely to come together in that way. If you're not with other people, you can do that for yourself.

0:33:45.3 KB: Love that idea. And that also would work in remote meetings too.

0:33:47.1 PC: Absolutely, yeah.

0:33:50.6 KB: Sometimes it's even more important.

0:33:52 PC: Yes. Have you ever caught yourself in a remote meeting, looking over and answering email and not really being in the meeting? Never.

0:34:00.6 KB: Never. That's never happened. And then that's inevitably when someone asks you a direct question.

0:34:07.6 PC: One of our partners asked me, last week, in the partner meeting, "And what does Patty think about that?" I was like, "Oh, no."

0:34:20.9 KB: Busted.

0:34:21.9 PC: Yeah. So another way of becoming present is to practice mindfully listening to the other person, and it's different than active listening. Active listening is a behavior. We can all practice active listening. We know what that looks like.

But an intention of mindfully listening is looking deeper. I'm hearing your words. What is going on while I'm looking at you? What's going on in your body? What are the non-verbals? Because we communicate 93% of the time non-verbally. There's so much there in your tone, the rise in the pitch, how your body language is with me, and what emotion am I picking up underneath your words. So if I'm listening mindfully, that takes an intention to be really with you, and it's amazing if you've never experienced someone else mindfully listening to you. It's a real gift. And so that's another way to become present throughout the day.

0:35:15.8 KB: And that seems like it would be a good thing to do, especially, if you're sort of having these conversations with clients by rote. It's like, "Yep, you have to talk to another client about their dog's weight," or "Yep, you have to talk to another client about why what they believe about nutrition may not actually be the best for their dog." And that can get so mechanical. They need us to listen and that can be very difficult, but I think that is a really good intention to set for those conversations.

0:35:44.4 PC: Yeah, I learned through another training that I've done that behind every behavior is a positive intention for that person, so to understand, even though it might not seem positive, what their motivation is, like you were saying, if someone's not feeding their animal the best nutrition, what is going on for that person? Because there's a reason behind that. Maybe it's financial, maybe they don't understand and think that feeding scraps off the table is loving, all kinds of reasons. But discovering what the reason is for that person requires mindfully listening.

Another, I think, really important thing that I forget to do for myself often, Katie, is the micro-moments of break. I can go hours and my mind and my body are disconnected. I don't even go, "Oh, my gosh. A bathroom break would be great right now." It's forgetting to eat, flying through the day and eating my lunch at 3:30, that type of thing. So if you find that it's difficult to find a space in the office where you're not going to get interrupted, even go into a bathroom, nobody interrupts you usually in the bathroom. Go into the bathroom and lock the door and set your timer on your phone for a minute. Literally breathing for even a minute can reset so much and just give you that presence of mind of like, "I'm doing this for me, and nobody can get to me right now. This one minute is all for me."

0:37:24.4 KB: I love that. And we are so conditioned in health care and veterinary care to not take that time for ourselves during the day. It's like we think we're not as worthy or not working as hard if we take a minute for ourselves and that's just not true.

0:37:39.8 PC: For me, it has felt like a badge of honor. Even before COVID, I just think about how often most of us came to work sick and worked through it. And all these things of like, "I don't need a break. I can power through." Like you're saying, more worthy or more important of significance or competency. It's like, "Wow, look at me."

And honestly, what I have found in our office is the more we take care of ourselves, the more others are looking at that and giving themselves permission. It's supportive, and we haven't realized. We've talked about it a lot as a group, as a management team, how we have feared that unhealthy behavior with each other and supported this unhealthy culture, versus really changing that and talking about it and talking about our fears. Like, "Well, what if I worked until 8:30 last night and come in at 9:00, are you judging me because...?" Or do I flood your email box with excuses of, "I'm going to come in late because I worked till 9:30 last night"? The healthier, I think, approach is to be open, transparent with our fears and what works for us, what would work for me, what would work for you to support yourself in a healthy way of not working yourself into the ground.

0:39:03.4 KB: Yeah.

I think I'd like to close here with a mindful minute for our listeners.

So if you're listening to this in a place where you can't take a minute now, come back to the end of

this episode and take this mindful minute with Patty. You can take it for yourself, and it's a form of leading from within the team. If you're not a manager and not a practice owner, but you feel strongly that this is something that would help you and would help everyone on your team, you can lead by example by doing this for yourself. I would encourage everybody today to just set the intention now to take a mindful minute for yourself sometime throughout the day.

So Patty, when you're ready.

0:39:45.5 PC: Excellent. So, Katie, I'd like to invite you and your listeners to sit back and get yourself comfortable with your feet on the ground and firmly seated in your seat with your back against your supportive cushion or wherever you are.

And next, I'd like to invite you to close your eyes and if you're not comfortable with that, just softly gazing down towards the floor is fine as well, and just notice your breath.

Bringing your attention to your breath. See if you can increase your breath all the way down to your belly, maybe even putting your hand on your belly and see if you can feel your breath.

Rise, blow out. And now bringing your attention to the pause at the top of your breath and at the exhale.

And now I invite you to think about your happy place. Maybe that's somewhere that you liked a vacation. Maybe it's in your home. Maybe it's with family or friend. Just bring that to mind right now. And as you have that in your mind, I want you to pay attention to what you notice. What are the sounds that you hear there? How does your body feel as you think about this place?

Now, bringing your attention back to your breath, again, breathing naturally all the way down to your belly. And now bringing your attention back to your body, noticing your feet on the floor, the weight on the chair, bringing your attention back to this space.

You can open your eyes when you're ready.

0:41:51.2 KB: Patty, thank you. I feel much more grounded - and it helps to have a sleeping pet on your lap when you do this. Obviously that's not a requirement, but I'm starting to believe that's maybe why we find that so relaxing, because they're already doing that. And just feeling that presence on your body is a way to make you more aware.

0:42:14.1 PC: Absolutely. Yeah, that's a great example of being present with your loved one there on your lap and petting them and feeling their fur. Definitely a great way to become present.

0:42:26.0 KB: Well, Patty Casebolt. Thank you so much for joining us. I hope everyone has gained something from this episode, because I definitely have. I really appreciate your time today.

0:42:35.2 PC: Thank you, Katie. It's been fun.

0:42:36.4 KB: And thanks everyone for listening. We'll catch you next time.

I hope you got as much as I did out of this conversation. After we stopped recording, I actually told

Patty that I wanted to stick to a mindful minute at the beginning and end of my workday every day for a month. And I was going to report back to her and she said she would check up on me. This episode is going to come out after that month is done, I believe, so I am putting it out here that I succeeded, even though it hasn't happened yet - because that's going to be my accountability.

So I really want to try this for myself. And I would challenge any of you to think about whether you want to try incorporating a mindful minute into your day too.

I also want to give CareCredit another big thank you for making this episode possible, both by introducing us to Patty and by making it possible for her to come and talk to us today and give us all this wonderful advice. So CareCredit, thank you very much. We're so excited and pleased and proud to partner with you on these conversations. Thanks everyone. Talk to you next time.