



CELEBRATION: SAVORING WHAT'S AWESOME NOW

GUEST: CHRIS PACHEL, DVM, DACV

[00:00:00] **Colleen Pelar:** Welcome back to UNLEASHED (at work & home). Today my guest is Dr. Chris Pachel, a veterinary behaviorist with the animal behavior clinic in Portland, Oregon, and I deliberately invited Chris because he put out a post one day on Facebook about celebrating wins and asking what was something awesome that had happened recently? And I think that's something that we as people struggle with sometimes so I totally hooked up with him and said, "Please, please, please, come on my podcast," and he was so gracious and he said, yes. So thank you so much.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Absolutely Colleen. I'm happy to be here. I'm grateful to be a part of the conversation with you absolutely.

Colleen Pelar: I'm very excited to be talking today. So as a behaviorist you spend a lot of time looking at animals and what they do and what we would like to see them do more of. I think animals are pretty good at celebrating a win. What do you think?

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Absolutely. It's amazing what we can see in their body language and also recognizing that for the most [00:01:00] part they sort of stay out of their own way. They're very much sort of in the moment. And then I find from most of them at least they're not getting kind of lost in that circular headspace where we overthink things and we get wrapped up in should I or shouldn't I? I mean these animals are, they are what they are. They're pretty transparent about it. And we get to have that conversation with them and in some cases kind of celebrate that joy with them.

Colleen Pelar: Yeah that prefrontal cortex helps us sometimes and sometimes it really doesn't.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Man. It's a bugger sometimes.

Colleen Pelar: I know you have a dog Corneliuz. Can you tell us a little bit about how you see him celebrate?

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Yeah, absolutely. He's a new dog for me and by that, I mean, he's almost five years old. So he's been with me since he was an older puppy, but the dogs that I had previous to him were uh, both a cattle dog and then I had a Great Dane as well. So on one hand a bit more controlling, work-oriented, a bit more [00:02:00] serious and then the Great Dane was a bit more let's say anxiety prone and she wasn't exactly the most

confident dog in the world. Corneliuz is 3/4 bull terrier and then something else, which is debatable depending on which DNA test you look at, and so he's a much more sort of forward dog. He's much more impulsive. He's much more exuberant as a good way to put it and so it's fun to watch him. See those changes within his body language and his expressions when he's really just living life to the fullest and whatever that happens to be and it's also been interesting because that exuberant word sometimes means he can get a little bit carried away as well so sometimes we wish that his prefrontal cortex is a little bit more engaged in certain situations.

Colleen Pelar: Yes. That's true. I've always liked exuberant as a word to describe the dogs who are a lot. [00:03:00] It doesn't have some of the negative emotional baggage of some of the other words that my clients use when they're describing the dog. I'm like, well, he's just really exuberant. He throws himself into it.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Absolutely heart and soul in every action.

Colleen Pelar: And that's something that I'm trying to become better at being. I'm trying to be a little bit more heart and soul into every action because we spend a lot of time with the shoulds in this world. I should do this, I should do that. These expectations that we either put on ourselves or that other people put upon us and that sometimes makes us shrink and hold back a little bit.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Absolutely. And I love that you use that that particular word, the should word. I was just reading an article about a week and half ago or so. It came across my feed on LinkedIn and it was an article talking specifically about that. That if this person could, I forget exactly how the author said it, but something to the effect of if we could sort of get rid of this one word and reframe what those statements actually [00:04:00] look like, it's amazing how the entire conversation changes when we take away that that sense of judgment or that sense of expectation. You know, he should or she should or I should, and it immediately sets up sort of this comparison between what we think is and what we think should be. And then we're kind of wrestling and trying to balance and trying to either live up to or change something that just isn't perhaps quite working the way we think it should. And gosh, those judgments are just a beast to try to work around in most cases

Colleen Pelar: Yeah, they really are. So tell us from the perspective of celebrating, what are some ways that we could use celebration to help us be more present and a little less burdened by our shoulds?

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Yeah, I think it's a fantastic question to ask and I think that there's multiple ways to look at that. Part of it is the how and there's also the kind of the why behind that. [00:05:00] And I've done a fair amount of reading on the way that the brain functions both from a kind of a philosophy direction as well as from a neuro-physiological basis, and it's amazing when you really look at everything that the brain is capable of and how hard it works, whether we're aware of it or not, it's amazing how much

more attentive our brains and our sort of conscious as well as our subconscious can be when we're programming it to pay attention to the things that we want it to pay attention to. I've been in different seminars, for example, where they'll say okay now for the next 10 seconds look around the room and just notice everything that's blue and it's like you just pause for that moment. You look like, "Wow, there's a heck of a lot of blue in this room." And we could make that blue. We could make it red. We can make it purple, but then all of a sudden we start to see those things and gosh if you're someone who really likes the color blue when you were just so [00:06:00] busy and so lost in your own head space that you had forgotten to look around and see it man the moment we tell our brain, "I'm supposed to be paying attention to blue." Boom! Blue is everywhere and all of a sudden it completely changes that entire perspective of how we're viewing the world. And it really just reminds me of the fact that every single one of us has our own sort of second-to-second, minute-to-minute perception and we have more power than we're aware of to really program what that perception can look like.

Colleen Pelar: Absolutely. I love that you brought up the notice what's blue example because on my website, I have a download of 10 ways to recharge when you don't have time to take a break and one of them is exactly that. It's identify what's blue and then it says okay after you've done that if you need another one, what's fuzzy? What's shiny? This looking at something like that, but it's so funny that you should bring up the something blue because the image is this whole blue room and this idea of [00:07:00] like take a second and look around you and brings you back into that moment and it gives your brain a job, which is helpful and also opens you up to noticing really what is there. And so when we do that with gratitude that works really well when we start saying, what's good in this situation?

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Absolutely, and this concept here kind of ties into something that I was working on probably about a year or so ago that that was really kind of transformative for me. And it kind of takes both of these concepts about kind of the blue and the should. I was working through this process of trading expectations for appreciation and what I found in my own life is when I was getting really frustrated or really kind of in some cases downright angry about a particular situation. I was like, "God, you know, why am I so upset? Why am I so just emotionally fired up about this?" And what I was finding for myself is there was something that I had brought to that situation, some sort of preconceived expectation of what I thought [00:08:00] should be or what I thought the outcome was going to be, and the moment things didn't match up. It was like my brain was just ticked at the world and I was like, "Okay. Well, that's great. Now I know why." But I'm still struggling with it because my brain is still not happy about this. And so, with some help of some individuals, we had a good conversation and we came up with this essentially a hashtag "trade expectations for appreciation" and it was sort of a way for me to pause and say things like, "You know, I expected that I was going to get to work on time by only allowing myself 12 minutes. I appreciate that everybody else in Portland was thinking the exact same thing and my schedule is no more or less important than theirs are and I appreciate that. I need to allow 15 minutes for that commute if it's during rush hour and I appreciate that I arrived there safely, even if I was a couple minutes late and [00:09:00] I

appreciate that. My clients were understanding even though I didn't live up to that that commitment that I had promised to be on time and to be ready." There's like all of a sudden, by switching that from kind of this conflict in this expectation to "What can I appreciate about this?" all of a sudden the entire perception of that situation turned from me sort of rushing through traffic and trying to cut that red light and all of those things, to, "You know what? Let's fill this with gratitude instead." And it completely changed the way that my brain was thinking about those situations. And the more I did it, the more natural it became and the faster those appreciations came. After a while, I kind of fell off the wagon in doing it because I'm like, I'm just kind of running through life appreciating a whole lot of stuff right now. So now it's more of a rarity that I need to do it, but it's still one of my go-tos to be able to not only sort of think about what is the impact of doing that, but also how do I actually start to [00:10:00] rewire or reprogram or reframe those situations in a way that's more productive.

Colleen Pelar: Yeah, and that makes me think of dog training--because everything in the world makes me think of dog training--but you started with the how and the why and when we explain to people why a dog is behaving in a certain way doesn't actually help you fix anything yet, but it helps us to reframe in our minds what's happening and to change expectations and all of that. And then the how is the actual work of noticing and redirecting and changing it. And so like you said when you started to recognize what was happening to you the how took some practice until it became habit and then now it's not something you're consciously thinking about all the time because it's just a piece of you. You don't need to do it quite as much but that whole struggle of "I understand this is how it should be and yet I can't quite get there" and the deliberate practice of "okay, I'm gonna have to do baby steps." I love "trade [00:11:00] expectations for appreciation" as a mental reframe. That's awesome.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Yeah, it was and I created these little reminders for myself along the way and I kind of taught myself just like we do with the dogs that we're working with, what is that first body language indication that you know that that animal is about to react or behave in a particular way and can we rewind it back to that very first moment? And so really working with myself to say what is the first thing that I do and how can I sort of start to create more of a knee-jerk reaction to say, I'm holding my breath or upper lip is starting to clench little bit. And so like okay, that's the pause button. Pause, pause, pause. Just like we would for clients. Your dog is starting to tense up through the shoulder, pause, can you put that on a freeze frame for a second until you figure out what to do? And for me that was the moment of saying pause, TEFA (#tradeexpectationsforappreciation). What does that mean? What can I [00:12:00] do right here in this moment? And then go. The circuitry starts to happen a little bit faster and a little bit faster and then it starts to run on its own, which is just a really cool moment to start to recognize but it's not foolproof. You have a rough week. You have a couple of bad days in a row and, man, it's amazing what happens and how kind of quickly we can get knocked off of that rhythm. And so having the how available to say, "Okay, I know what worked. I know how I got there and I know how I'm gonna get back as well" was important for me.

Colleen Pelar: And really understanding that it is normal to get knocked off track, that, okay, we did make a great behavior change and it was awesome and then fell apart. But I can get back there. I can.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Yeah, perfect example, I expect that once I've made a behavior change, that it's going to be self-sustaining from that point forward. I appreciate that, no, no, it's not, It's [00:13:00] gonna be ongoing and life is gonna change and circumstances change and emotional reactions change and where we are in this constant state of evolution and adaptation, you know adaptation, and all of those things that that require us to have a pretty significant toolbox to be able to pull in and put away as needed.

Colleen Pelar: Yeah, that's really true. So because we are so often hooked and carried away before we recognize that that's happening. What are some tips that you would suggest for people working in stressful environments like an animal clinic or a shelter or anything like that to start celebrating their small wins?

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: I think there's a couple of different things. Um, if you're working within a team, I think it's amazing to be able to do that truly as a collaborative effort and whether that's kind of big picture and just saying, "Hey, I want us to change our mindset on this," or whether it's something really simple and really practical, , maybe it's something that we start at [00:14:00] a staff meeting. So maybe it's once a month once a week. It's not very often at all, but we start that meeting by saying, "Does anybody have a really cool experience, something that was a really transformational moment, something that was really uplifting, something that somebody said, or perhaps the success that you had with one of the animals in the clinic or the shelter" or something. The first couple times we do it it's crickets. It's like, "No. No, I'm not talking. I'm not sharing anything good to me. No, no, no." And , as long as we start to do that consistently, even in that moment, it's amazing what happens. We kind of start to come into those staff meetings or this group meetings thinking, "Gosh, he might call on me. I need to be thinking about something that was really really good." And so maybe that's something that starts to build. Maybe it's only five minutes before the staff meeting, but now it's the day before and now it's the week before and now something happens today after the staff meeting and we're thinking, "I need to save that because that was an amazing thing to share with the [00:15:00] team." And we're starting to recognize and file those things away. So we have them to refer to because, yeah, there's gonna be the moment where you could have 37 of those moments in a row and then something is going to glitch and so having the ability to say, "Gosh, you know, I can recognize that these really amazing experiences have been happening all around me, and sure this one wasn't so great." But that's one out of 38 versus if we're just sort of clicking along responding to life as it happens. Our brains are wired to recognize the negatives. They're wired to recognize the danger zones. We're programmed to really be aware of that as a way to maintain our own sense of safety and security. And so if we're not being somewhat proactive and recognizing those moments on a minute-to-minute, day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month basis. It's really easy to get overwhelmed by all of the negativity and it's not that the world is any more [00:16:00] or less negative when we reframe our perceptions, but we just notice things differently and the negatives aren't quite

as impactful.

Colleen Pelar: Right and that's important piece. The negatives are still there, but they aren't quite as impactful. They're not hurting us as much. They're not hurting the people we care about as much because we were bleeding all of our negative on to them. They're not hurting our relationships with our co-workers. It's still there, but we're more powerful in our ability to address those negatives if we can notice what's good.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Absolutely and it is that process and it is a matter of, in some cases to if we're really struggling with that, not everybody's going to be able to say, "Aha! Trade expectations for appreciation," and immediately run with it. Some people are going to say, "Yeah, but you know, your world is different from mine. My life really sucks right now." And I get that. We've all had varying degrees of that, whether it's our circumstances or whether it's our own physical or emotional struggles that we're going through. We're all [00:17:00] going to be coming out this from a different perspective, a different starting point. And yet for me what I love about some of these kind of little tricks and these little strategies is if we're able to take the situation and, just like we do with dog training and just like we do in the medical field, we bring it back to data. You know we try to get away from oh, I feel or I think. It's not that those emotions are bad or that there's not a valid place for them, but sometimes the emotional reaction gets in the way of us really processing what is actually present. So bringing it back to the data, I could be really annoyed because it's raining out today--it's not, it's actually glorious blue sky today--but I could be annoyed that it's raining and yet the rain isn't a negative thing. It's my perception of the rain that is changing that. So if I can say, "Oh it is raining." That's it. There's water falling from the sky. That's all that it is. That's just the data. That is what's happening. Then I can decide what to think or how to incorporate my thoughts into that [00:18:00] versus coming out it from that frustration of, but I wanted to go for a run, but we were supposed to have a picnic, but I'm gonna get wet when I take the dog for a walk. And we can say, "Yeah, it's raining and you know, I'll run tomorrow." And maybe I really didn't want to go for a picnic anyway, and I can use an umbrella and I don't have to get wet if I don't want to. There are solutions for each of these situations. If we bring it back to data versus really kind of dwelling on the frustration or the angst or the anger that surrounds our reaction to it.

Colleen Pelar: Yes. Yeah. I think that's a really good example. I talked to a woman a while back who was really in a stuck spot. She was really feeling like there was nothing was going to get better. Everything was super hard and all of the happy-happy-joy-joy suggestions of positive psychology were a load of crap, and I understand that feeling. I completely understand that feeling and yet we have to do something. We can't eliminate all these negatives but it's not [00:19:00] helping us to dwell and that's where she was. She was really stuck and frustrated and angry. And I was like begging to find what are the small pieces and we were looking for the celebrations that we could find. And it really was like what are the small things? What's one thing good? When I do sessions, I sometimes ask people to tell me one tiny good thing. It's easy to do the really big, good thing. Like I'm so grateful I have a great relationship with my husband. Fabulous, but that's big. Give me something tiny. Like I have a pen that writes really well. Awesome. Those are the ones, the

micro-moments that make up your day. So if we can go what are the little tiny things that are bringing you joy and she rolled her eyes when she looked at me and she goes, "This chair doesn't suck." I was like "Yes!" Because we've all been in an uncomfortable chair and this one is not bad. Okay, then my reaction made her laugh, and I thought, "Oh, thank [00:20:00] goodness." That was our little celebration was that her chair was tolerable. It's a challenging piece and it does sometimes come down to like, "Let's just look at the baseline here. What do we got?" And when you're saying bring it back to the data, I think it's a little bit of that that there is something good in our data.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Yes. Absolutely. And it brings me right back to the blue comment, you know, even if you're saying, "Well, there's nothing around me that's good right now." And you say well, "Okay. How would you know? What is the thing that you're looking for? What would be something that is good for you?" So if we talk about celebrating a win. What does a win mean to you? And then especially if we're talking on a one-on-one basis or really challenging people to think about that we can talk about sort of, as you mentioned, the different sort of levels of wins. Are we talking about a pen that writes really well? Are we talking about a relationship or a home or a lifestyle or a career? You know these big picture things. And we can figure out what really [00:21:00] constitutes a win and we can come at it from either angle. If you're someone who's a really big picture person saying, "I need to have all of these things in place." Well, let's break it down. Let's start with a pen that writes and a chair that doesn't suck. And let's kind of build that world together and vice versa. If we start to say, "okay, I recognize the pain and I recognize the chair but my life is still really hard." Let's start to do some math. You've got one good thing, two good things, three good things. What is it going to take to really be able to recognize what that win would look like for you. Because if you haven't defined what it is, even just at a basic level, how are we ever going to know when it comes our way?

Colleen Pelar: It's really interesting as you say that. Because I haven't actually phrased it that way with people about their own behavior and yet I always phrase it that way with people about their dogs. You know, like we do need to know, "What does yes look like? What is good?" And [00:22:00] particularly with this woman, I wasn't saying, "What are you looking for?" And I love that idea of let's define it. What is the win? It's feeling like a giant blind spot to me as you've just illuminated it but it's true because I'm always looking specifically behavior-wise, what do you want? But from that big picture of what does a win look like, I really like that idea because when you're struggling it's really hard to articulate what that might be. You don't know what a win looks like and so you're never going to find it because you haven't defined it.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Yeah, it's never going to come your way. And even if people are showering love and support and saying, "Oh but you've got this, and you've got that, and you've got so much to be grateful for, and you got so much to be thankful for," and, and, and. if your brain has not identified any of those things as a win or as something that's worthy of celebration, it's just noise. And it's amazing to me when I when I think, and this is sort of fresh on my [00:23:00] mind because I've got a vacation coming up here in about a week and half and I'm super excited about it, yet it always it always reminds me that for so

many of us we sort of, and I hear this and if we could say I'm guilty of it, I know I've had those moments too, where we sort of feel like we're struggling through the day-to-day to get to that vacation. And whether that's you know, struggling through the workweek to get to Friday afternoon and celebrate the weekend or whatever it is. I think that we are missing a lot of opportunity because even you know, let's say my life is terrible and I've got this glorious vacation. The vacation is going to end and I'm gonna come back to that life that I left behind. Yes, there are times where just getting the opportunity to sleep and to recharge, to do those things, that may be all we need to kind of hit that reset button. But if we're truly struggling to recognize those winds in the day to day, the vacation--and I've had periods in my life where I felt this with every part of my [00:24:00] being--the vacation is almost worse than never going on vacation. It's almost like a tease. You feel like, "Oh my gosh, my life could be so amazing, if only I could be on vacation every day." And the answer, you know, if you actually went on vacation every day, it's only a matter of time before you start to recreate all of those same patterns. So you got to fix the pattern. You got to be able to find the joy the way you would on vacation or the way you would in those life-changing moments and be able to celebrate that on a day-to-day basis. And so then you get to celebrate new things and different things on vacation and it is a break from the routine and it's an opportunity to challenge your brain to think about things differently. And you're practicing the same skill set that you're utilizing on a day-to-day basis to really celebrate all of that, which is just amazing when it starts to happen.

Colleen Pelar: Yes, and when we think about some of the real benefits of vacation, some of it comes before and some of it comes after, so the whole anticipatory [00:25:00] stage where you're like, "I'm going on vacation," that's awesome. And then the reflective stage like, "Wasn't it great when we did this or did that?" Well we can recognize those have value if we can try to put them into our regular lives with, "Next Tuesday, I'm having dinner with a friend," and I can anticipate that for a week and then have dinner with a friend and then spend a week thinking, "Wasn't it great that I made time to have dinner with a friend?" And it's so much smaller than a vacation and yet we're using those same skills, using those same patterns.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Yes, and it is and it's a practice and everybody's gonna approach that a little bit differently. For me, I find that I can think about things and they help me in the moment. But unless I write them down--and I don't enjoy journaling but there's something about my brain that doesn't really remember it until I've written it down--so I have to do that. Even though it's that part of them like, annoying, grab the journal, write it down, do your thing. That part I don't enjoy but man it's amazing [00:26:00] how much easier it is for me to reflect back or to think forward when I've acknowledged those details, the actual experience, the anticipation, the reflection. And then it starts to become just like everything else. It's a habit. "Gosh, I'm super excited. I get to see three clients or five clients today. What an amazing opportunity I have to be able to impact those lives in a positive way" versus "I'm going to go to work." Wah, wah. And again it's a reframing and it's not just a matter of trying to trick yourself into being happy. It's finding the things that are truly worthy of celebration and that's going to be different for me than it is for you. It's going to be different for anybody who happens to

be listening to this this podcast later on. We are not going to celebrate the same things and that's not only okay, that's amazing.

Colleen Pelar: Yes. And it's really cool to hear what other people celebrate because it opens your eyes to new ideas. You know where we are like, "Oh, no, [00:27:00] it's raining," and someone else is like, "Isn't it wonderful because my vegetable garden has been really waiting." Oh, okay, I hadn't thought about it that way and it is fun that we will each have our own unique things that we celebrate. That's part of what makes us individual. That's what's the fun is, our quirks.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: I was in a workshop not too long ago at a conference that I was at. One of the presenters was talking about sort of the duality of some of these sort of highs and lows and she was giving some of these specific examples. And one of the ones that came up, for example, we said, well, here's the thing I celebrate: I love when a client has that sort of aha moment where they're like, "Oh I get it. Now I understand." You know why this medical condition is progressing the way it. Or why this dog is doing the thing that it's doing and we love those aha moments and yet we are so frustrated when the client doesn't get it. These are, to some degree, they're just kind of the opposite side of the [00:28:00] exact same situation. And so sometimes even recognizing, "Okay, the thing that I would celebrate as a win is this, and that's not going to happen every time." So if I'm in that communication sphere with the client and I'm trying to help them understand, if we're not quite there yet, what are some of the other things that may happen? You know, I may need to tell the client the same thing five times. I may need to reframe it five different ways before they get it. They may do it wrong. They may do a lot of self-judgment because they're doing it wrong. They may ask weird questions that are completely off topic because they don't understand where we're going yet. All of these different variations and I can say okay when those things happen we're close. We're there and I'm going to recognize when that aha moment happens. And so rather than just getting frustrated by the fact that it's not getting there, we can reframe that into again that appreciation. I understand and I appreciate that the client wants to [00:29:00] understand otherwise, they wouldn't be in my office. I appreciate that they're invested in the process because they haven't shut down in the conversation yet. I appreciate they're asking questions--even if they're weird--I appreciate that they're asking because it tells me what's going on in their brain. And so I get the opportunity to then guide the process. But it's finding those the moments of appreciation and really connecting in all of those ways that just allows us to impact lives in such a meaningful way including our own.

Colleen Pelar: Yeah and the idea of that you celebrate the aha moment for the client as a win also implies that we don't always win. Often we don't celebrate that moment of the aha. We take that as the expected result: "Well, of course, they figured it out and that was good," but we didn't celebrate that. We didn't go "Yay! I had a client communication and we both got it. It was clear." So looking at it that way then we go, "Okay that time, I won. This time I'm still in the game, still working. I'm not quite at the finish line yet, but I'm still here."

[00:30:00] **Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB:** Yeah, and nobody wins everything all the time. If we if we turn this into sports analogies, which is not my forte.

Colleen Pelar: Mine either.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: You could have the best team in the world. You could look back through their record and go what happened in '82? What was going on there? You guys are amazing and yet even you struggled for some reason or another. So it is it is that that process and that balance that has to be there. It is something that we have to really celebrate those moments in order to recognize the whole, the whole big picture

Colleen Pelar: This is so fun. I think maybe it was going to be the five-hour podcast because I'm totally enjoying talking to you. Two behavior nerds on a roll! So I have a question I love to ask all my guests because the answers come out so different. You have a dog, Corneliuz, and if Corneliuz could speak English and I said to him, "So tell me a little bit about Chris." What would he say? How would he describe you?

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: That's a [00:31:00] great question. I've never thought about that. I always think about one of the things that I've learned from my dog. And what do I most want to teach them and what I want them to say, but I've never thought about what my dog would say about me. I think that that there would be words like "intense," hopefully "passionate," "compassionate," "driven." I would hope that that he would say things that I've always got the best interests of the people and the individuals, uh, that that surround me at the front of my radar. I know that that's not the 24/7 reality but those are the things that I hope that he would recognize. And I hope that he would say that even though when when there are times where I struggle that that he can tell that I'm trying and then I'm making an attempt to do well. Yeah, that's what that's what I would hope he would say.

Colleen Pelar: Yeah, and that would be [00:32:00] great if everyone could see that in each other, wouldn't it? That even when we struggle we can see that that we're all trying, because so often we interpret things as personal affronts, like you didn't file the report right because you hate me, not because you were busy or distracted.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: I heard some of this, I forget exactly where so I can't I can't even attribute this source to this, but they said one of their little mantras that they use is whenever they feel that frustration or that moment they say, "I tell myself this individual is doing the best they can with the skills that they have in this moment." And what I love about that is that even when people perhaps do some really damaging or horrific things or say the wrong words or do something that we think, "Oh my gosh, I can't believe they ever would," there's a big picture behind that. And I have to believe that people are doing the best they can with the tools they have [00:33:00] available to them in that moment. When I reframe it that way it's really hard to be judgmental. Every one of us has that moment where all you want to tell people is, "I'm trying, I'm trying, and right now I am struggling. I'm struggling hard, and I'm doing the best that I can with this right here right now." If we can sort of reframe that, how we perceive others and rather than creating all of those stories

surrounding, "Oh, well, I'm sure that he's mad at me for this," or "I can't believe she would do this because of this," rather than creating the story say "You know that didn't go the way that I wanted to do, but I'm grateful that that he's trying. I'm grateful doing the best he can with the tools he has available to him in that moment," and it's just amazing what that does for your sense of connection and to really reach out and say, "Is there any way that that my skills would be helpful to that person? They're struggling right now. Is there anything that I have that could be [00:34:00] meaningful to them? And is there anything that they have that could be meaningful to me?" We start to build these collaborations and these support networks that are so important not only for-- well, they're important for everything. Everything about what we do gets better when we can build those collaborations and those networks and those communities in whatever forum is relevant to us.

Colleen Pelar: Yes, and that's what fills us back up. Having people who care, or animals who care, but we have to have people who care. So when we get ourselves stress and we're like, "I only like animals," the reality is we do need the human connections.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Absolutely.

Colleen Pelar: So this has been tons of fun. If listeners wanted to learn more about you and the work you do, how could they do that?

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Great question. If they want to learn more about the work that we're doing professionally, a lot of that information comes through my practice, which is the [Animal Behavior Clinic](#) in Portland. If they want to connect with me on a more personal level by all means they can follow or connect on either [Facebook](#) or [00:35:00] Instagram. The only thing I ask is just to send a message that introduces yourself. I love those connections. I love being able to meet people in all sorts of different venues but I also don't just want to run around collecting friends on Facebook. That's not the thing for me. It's not a number. I want to be able to say, "I met this this amazing individual Colleen, and, and, and." So if you want to connect with me in any of those platforms just take a moment to introduce yourself and tell me why you want to connect, That's going to say something about you and I'll reciprocate right back. I'm in the process of putting together a site that's going to kind of pull a bunch of my different interests and pull them all into one place, but I haven't done that yet. When I do, I'll announce something on Facebook and Instagram.

Colleen Pelar: And then we'll update the show notes at that point. But in the meantime the show notes will point toward the animal behavior clinic and all of the other ways too.

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: That sounds fantastic, Colleen. And I appreciate that.

Colleen Pelar: This has been so much fun. I think that we had a really fun conversation about [00:36:00] celebration, and I hope that other people will start celebrating. If anyone's looking for ways to take a break at work, apparently one of my 10 tips is recommended by Dr. Chris Pachel!

Chris Pachel, DVM, DACVB: Blue, blue, blue!

Colleen Pelar: So that's a free PDF download on the website if you want it. We're always here at UNLEASHED (at work & home) trying to find ways to just have better days. So I'm really really grateful to you, Chris, for coming on today. It was really a lot of fun.