

**0:00:04.2 Katie Berlin:** Hi, welcome back to Central Line. I'm Katie Berlin, and we are on site at AAHA CON 2023 in San Diego. We have been speaking to a lot of people here, and it's fantastic to be out of my little home office and among so many inspiring people. We have a very inspiring person here today, Dr. Peter Weinstein. Welcome to Central Line.

**0:00:27.0 Peter Weinstein:** Hi, Katie. So good to be here. I thought this is where you were putting in a central line before you started chemo or something on me, but I came in and they put headset and a microphone in front.

**0:00:36.0 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, the central line name is thanks to Jessica Vogel saying she's so good at naming things. So it's a superpower, being able to come up with just the right name. And we get at the heart of things.

**0:00:46.7 Peter Weinstein:** Oh, touche. All right. Could you do a bypass on me while we're sitting here?

**0:00:54.2 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, no.

**0:00:54.9 Peter Weinstein:** [0:00:57.7] \_\_\_\_\_ surgery?

**0:00:58.0 Katie Berlin:** No, no, no.

**0:00:57.9 Peter Weinstein:** All right.

**0:00:58.0 Katie Berlin:** Definitely not my bag.

**0:00:58.1 Peter Weinstein:** Okay.

**0:01:00.2 Katie Berlin:** But there are a lot of surgeons in the building, so we probably could figure that out. Hopefully that won't be necessary.

**0:01:05.4 Peter Weinstein:** Hope not.

**0:01:06.5 Katie Berlin:** Peter, would you mind just giving everyone a little bit of bio on yourself, who you are and what it is you're really excited about right now?

**0:01:14.5 Peter Weinstein:** Well, thank you. And I'm a veterinarian. I've been through the 12-step process but could not get out of being a veterinarian.

**0:01:22.3 Katie Berlin:** Ditto.

**0:01:22.8 Peter Weinstein:** Yes. Went to the University of Illinois, graduated, moved to Southern California two weeks after graduation. So being in San Diego is like old home week. I drove down. And sorry that you've gotten less than San Diego-like weather while you're here.

**0:01:37.6 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, I was a little disappointed yesterday.

**0:01:39.6 Peter Weinstein:** But I started my own hospital three years out of school, realized how

little I knew about running a business. So I went back to school at night while running my practice to get a business degree, which was extremely eye-opening. Gave me new ideas on how to run my business so we were able to build it, expand it, move it, expand it, and ultimately I sold to a consolidator so I could do other things within the profession and be a greater influencer from that standpoint.

**0:02:08.8 Peter Weinstein:** And I've had a passion with organized veterinary medicine having worked locally in Southern California within the state at the California VMA. I was the executive director for the Southern California VMA for 14 years. So I've been very involved with setting the tone, setting the leadership and being an advocate for the veterinary profession. I left organized veterinary medicine from a position standpoint to see to what I wanted to do for the last third of my professional life. And I focused on education and teaching.

**0:02:47.0 Peter Weinstein:** So, one of the things I do now is I teach the veterinary students at Western University, College of Veterinary Medicine in Pomona, third year business and finance. I come to conferences like this with no business to promote except the business of veterinary medicine, and a mantra that says we need to bring fun back into the veterinary profession. I do a lot of this because I have two children, both are millennials. One is doing marvelously in Austin, Texas, selling software. The other is a June 2023 graduate from Oregon State University, go Beavers, and is a doctor of veterinary medicine practicing in her first job. She's two weeks in.

**0:03:32.3 Katie Berlin:** Wow.

**0:03:33.6 Peter Weinstein:** In Cairns, Australia.

**0:03:35.8 Katie Berlin:** Wow.

[chuckle]

**0:03:35.8 Peter Weinstein:** That's everybody's response. Wow. We freaking eat veterinarians in the United States and you send her to Australia. No, she decided to go to Australia and I supported her seizure.

[laughter]

**0:03:48.0 Katie Berlin:** Yes, I mean they need veterinarians everywhere so I'm sure they're very happy to have her but that's pretty far away for you as a dad.

**0:03:54.0 Peter Weinstein:** Yeah, it's tough on one hand on the other hand when your kids are happy, you are happy too and so whether she worked in San Diego and was unhappy or happier or in Australia, I can come to San Diego anytime but I'm thinking vacation.

**0:04:14.0 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, it's a good reason.

**0:04:14.7 Peter Weinstein:** Yeah, Australia is a big country. I haven't seen all of it yet, so I'm looking forward to it. And so right now, my job, if I had a job title, is to just kind of push the profession kicking and screaming into the 20th century. We've got to get to the 20th before we can get to the 21st.

**0:04:31.8 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. There's a lot there. You just said a lot. You just won an award, too, didn't you, from the SCVMA?

**0:04:39.2 Peter Weinstein:** Well, I won from the California VMA, the State Award for Lifetime Achievement.

**0:04:44.5 Katie Berlin:** That's right, yeah.

**0:04:45.9 Peter Weinstein:** Which to me was a real honor, and it probably reflects the fact that I'm old. [chuckle]

**0:04:53.2 Katie Berlin:** Not everyone who's old and... Old is relative. But not everyone, as they get more experienced wins a Lifetime Achievement Award.

**0:05:01.5 Peter Weinstein:** No.

**0:05:01.7 Katie Berlin:** That's all I'm saying.

**0:05:04.0 Peter Weinstein:** I appreciate it. And I appreciate the honor from CVMA for the commitment and the time that I've given to organize veterinary medicine. And for anybody who's listening to this that has not gotten involved, your local, state, and national associations do have a very important role in helping you as a veterinarian direct your future legislatively from a public relations standpoint and from an advocacy standpoint. They're really there to be your cheerleader. And so think about organized veterinary medicine and how you can get involved to help set the tone and the direction for the veterinary profession going forward. That was a paid political announcement. [laughter]

**0:05:45.3 Katie Berlin:** But actually, it's one that's echoed by a lot of guests on this podcast. And it seems like we're choosing from a pretty diverse body of professionals. And yet many of them have that same refrain, which is get involved, find out ways that you can get involved and help and contribute a voice that isn't being heard or that's really, really needed right now. And so, I think that's a really good message. And I kind of wish... I don't know that I heard it that much when I graduated, but also like podcasts weren't as much of a thing when I graduated. And we didn't have so much going on on social media.

**0:06:21.0 Katie Berlin:** I had a Blackberry when I graduated. So, it's not like it was ages ago, but you weren't looking on Facebook all day. And I feel like now that messaging can be everywhere. And I think it's really important that it be. You also have a podcast.

**0:06:37.8 Peter Weinstein:** Correct.

**0:06:38.5 Katie Berlin:** Peter and Phil's Courageous Conversations.

**0:06:40.1 Peter Weinstein:** Correct.

**0:06:41.6 Katie Berlin:** And you've been doing that for a couple of years now?

**0:06:44.6 Peter Weinstein:** Almost. Well, we've been recording for over three years and we've got about just over two years worth of content that's online. You can find it at Spotify, Apple or any place that you listen to your podcast. [laughter] Or you can go to our website at [www.peterandphil.com](http://www.peterandphil.com). Dr. Philip Nelson and myself talk about social issues. We talk about the veterinary profession. We talk about sports. We talk about music. We get on every couple of weeks or weekly for three hours and just sit there and shoot the stuff.

**0:07:19.0 Peter Weinstein:** And we go in all sorts of different directions. But we'd love to have more listeners who want to get some lean on what's going on politically and what's also going on within the veterinary profession. Phil is the past dean of Western University. So he brings 40 years as an educator to the table and I bring a lot of years in all sorts of different roles from that standpoint. So we have fun just playing off each other.

**0:07:44.1 Katie Berlin:** Well, I really like that you bring both veterinary medicine and real life into it, because I do feel like sometimes you have to. We're told we have to make a choice or like commit all in with veterinary medicine. Or we have all these diverse interests in veterinary medicine it's just a job. And we can really veterinary medicine is real life. And you can bring all of the things that matter to you outside vet med into your career in veterinary medicine. And I think that's really important too. That's also messaging I didn't get. It's like it's okay to be a person outside of the clinic and to want to like know about stuff that isn't vet med.

**0:08:17.3 Peter Weinstein:** Yeah, we started the podcast with no intentions of anything more than just having conversations. And we envisioned the conversation the two neighbors would have over a hedgerow or sitting on the front porch in a rocking chair, just talking about the issues that were there. With maybe some different thoughts and opinions, but the willingness to speak with one another and respect the different perspectives that people have.

**0:08:46.1 Peter Weinstein:** And I think that is a real challenge with us as veterinarians sometimes with our staff members, our team. It can be difficult with our staff members, our team and our clients. And then we throw in the politics in this country at the moment. And these types of courageous conversations where you're able to sit, listen, and respect other people's perspectives, I think we've lost some of that. And I think it's created some of the chasm that exists between different people who have different ideas.

**0:09:17.5 Katie Berlin:** I agree. Hard agree. And also, I think before we started recording, I told you I was in kind of a burn it down phase. I want to burn stuff down. And I realized, of course, that social media is not the place to do that. But also wonder like for you personally and on the podcasts and discussions you have, where's that line? Like we're hearing other perspectives and responding calmly to those perspectives and being able to agree to disagree and see things from different angles, where's the line between that and I want to burn this down 'cause I don't believe in anything it stands for?

**0:09:57.3 Peter Weinstein:** We've had some tough guests on and we have some tough guests that we plan to speak to in the future. And I think the ultimate goal is you have to respect different people's opinions. Yeah, there's a lot of stuff on the news networks that make me want to turn off the TV. And I hearken back to the good old days when news was news and news wasn't social and you actually got real facts. You have to agree to disagree, but you have to be able to get up at the end of the conversation, shake hands and say we may not agree on things, but I appreciate your

sharing your perspective.

**0:10:45.2 Peter Weinstein:** And I think that's the tough thing. And we in practice deal with that with social media posts, with Yelp reviews and everything else. And sometimes we don't understand the perspective of the other person who's presenting. In some of our conversations, it's we don't necessarily agree with the perspective that's being presented. But I think if that person is listening to our perspective as well, and maybe we come a little bit closer because I really do think that this chasm between people has gotten Grand Canyon-esque. And I really would like it to get back to that crack between two pieces of cement.

**0:11:27.1 Peter Weinstein:** So, although we're not touching one another, at least we can wave across the crack and say, "Hey, it's good to see you." Instead of some of the other things that come out in social media, news, etcetera, etcetera.

**0:11:40.2 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, across the cracks. It's a new podcast. [laughter]

**0:11:48.5 Peter Weinstein:** I'm gonna leave that one open. [laughter]

**0:11:50.9 Katie Berlin:** So, I think that's good. You're more measured than I am in how you express that, and that's good. I'm going through a phase right now, for sure. I'm a little bit hot under the collar about some things, and I need to do a better job of listening to other perspectives, and I think a podcast is a really good way to do that because you can't like... I mean you could, but you don't want to be the guy that's like screaming at someone on a podcast. [laughter]

**0:12:16.6 Peter Weinstein:** I don't agree on everything. And he will present his point and say I don't know what you're trying to say, but I don't agree with it. [laughter] Which is fine.

**0:12:26.4 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, that's good.

**0:12:37.6 Peter Weinstein:** But I think when we were talking about your future, what's the world of Katie Berlin look like in the future? I think you have to rattle some cages. And I was having this conversation with Dr. Jessica Vogelsang last night about change. And I think change starts at the grassroots level. It starts with one person, having a message. And then finding a second person and four people. And it's much easier sometimes because of social media, because of how connected we are, although we're currently we're connected and disconnected, interestingly enough.

**0:13:09.8 Peter Weinstein:** I think doing that grassroots approach and finding other people who are willing to listen, be a part of the conversation and look to make change can take a whole bunch of speed boats and move things much quicker than the Titanic, which doesn't recognize that it's an iceberg ahead and keeps arguing with the fact that no, it's not an iceberg, so.

**0:13:33.9 Katie Berlin:** Yes. Yes. I love what you said about connected and disconnected and how now it's so much easier to find other people who can believe what you believe and want to support the cause you're championing. And then also, I hear people say that in-person conferences are changing, like sponsors are finding that their return on investment isn't as good when they go to conferences, especially if it's not one of the big ones.

**0:14:00.0 Katie Berlin:** And at the same time, the people that show up to in-person conferences, I

feel like are engaged and looking for that kind of real life connection. And so to me, it seems like what we're doing is just sort of sorting through people to see what's important to them at that time. And you can make virtual connections all day long, but there's nothing like being in the same room with people and feeling that energy altogether. You just don't get that on Zoom. So...

**0:14:26.3 Peter Weinstein:** This is my third conference in eight days. And I would agree with you that there are people who felt that they were in solitary confinement from March of 2020 to whenever somebody opened the door and let them out. And now, the energy, the enthusiasm of those people who are coming to conferences plus the attendance numbers reflect a group of individuals who are really looking to re-engage. Now, there are a whole group of people who are very happy, totally disengaged, and they can have their disengagement conference, which will basically be people sitting in four corners of a room not talking to one another. [chuckle]

**0:15:16.8 Katie Berlin:** Watching lectures on their own computer. [chuckle]

**0:15:18.3 Peter Weinstein:** Correct. But I think that their, just based upon the interactions in the room, the engagement in the room, the people asking questions, they're desperately wanting to be heard, they're desperately wanting to have a voice, and they're desperately wanting to change and make things better. So, I think I agree with you completely that we need to find ways to give people platforms and foundations and ways that they can connect, not just through a wire or the ether, but through face-to-face, person-to-person engagement in small group settings.

**0:15:56.8 Peter Weinstein:** I do think that some of these small group meetings of 10 to 12, or 20 or 40 allow people to have a voice and not be intimidated by a room of 400 or 500.

**0:16:08.7 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, absolutely. I was one of those people that would never raise my hand in a vet school lecture that had a whole auditorium full of people. But in a tutor group... So I went to Cornell and we had case-based learning. So in tutor group, I could be very vocal because it wasn't quite as scary. And now I just talk to everybody, but I don't know what happened. I had some kind of like event.

**0:16:27.3 Peter Weinstein:** You got out of Ithaca.

**0:16:29.1 Katie Berlin:** Maybe, yeah.

**0:16:31.3 Peter Weinstein:** I escaped from Ithaca. [laughter] But the veterinary school didn't want me, so you were there longer than I was, so...

**0:16:37.6 Katie Berlin:** Well, then I... See, then I moved to Colorado, which their vet school didn't want me either, so we just... We do what we got to do.

**0:16:42.3 Peter Weinstein:** Yeah.

**0:16:44.8 Katie Berlin:** Well, so, yesterday we did a live stream with Debbie Boone and Josh Weisman. Debbie just read a book called hospitality and healthcare and she talks a lot about meeting people where they are and working with the person in front of you and not sort of viewing hospitality as one size fits all. Like what can you do to make that person's day a little better because if they're not treating you great it's probably not personal. But, and you don't know why, but what

can you do to sort of turn that situation around or keep it from becoming a problem?

**0:17:13.2 Katie Berlin:** And I just, I'm thinking about what you're saying now, how much it seems like that relates to this issue of like who needs a conference? Who needs to be in that group and feel that engagement and feel supported by a community? And who would rather sit at home and get their CE like with their kids playing in the same room? We all need different things to feel fulfilled and happy in this career. And I feel like that ultimately has to be the key to retaining people, keeping them in the field and making them feel supported. Do you agree?

**0:17:44.0 Peter Weinstein:** I agree that I've got about a 15-minute answer.

**0:17:49.6 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, I'm sure. This is a book waiting to happen. [laughter]

**0:17:54.4 Peter Weinstein:** Yeah. The customized experience is what the current generation of individuals, pet owners, employees, veterinarians, yourself, looking that you're probably a Gen Y.

**0:18:13.1 Katie Berlin:** Yes, that's right. I'm an Xennial.

**0:18:16.9 Peter Weinstein:** Yeah. So the Gen Y, Gen Zs are really looking for customized experience. And we should be building customized education that they can go to that meets their needs. Now that could be virtual, it could be small group setting, or it could be a group of 40,000 at a football stadium. However they want it. Not all sizes fit. And that's what the internet has provided. It has provided communities where people can find where they fit. Whether they are a round peg or a square peg or a triangle peg, they can find the right hole. We've spent eons with a freaking hammer or mallet trying to put square pegs into round holes.

**0:19:04.1 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, that is me for sure.

**0:19:06.1 Peter Weinstein:** Or getting sandpaper and trying to sand off the corners and get them to fit. Well, why do that give people choices? And I think...

**0:19:15.0 Peter Weinstein:** To play off of that from Debbie's standpoint, in terms of hospitality, veterinary, first of all, ladies and gentlemen, whether you like the following statement or not, suck it up and deal with it, all right? Veterinary medicine is not a healthcare profession. We are a service industry that provides healthcare. And as a service industry, it means our clients are looking for an experience. And they're looking for a customized experience. They're looking for an experience that is built around them and their pets. And that means we can no longer be transactional. We have to be relational. We have to relate to people. We have to relate to their pets. We have to know their name. We have to know their pet's names. We've got to freaking know their pet's gender because there's nothing worse than getting sex wrong. And can I say that in this podcast?

**0:20:04.2 Katie Berlin:** Yes.

**0:20:06.4 Peter Weinstein:** Okay.

**0:20:06.9 Katie Berlin:** We're going to just make some stickers based on this quotes from this podcast.

**0:20:09.9 Katie Berlin:** Okay. So all of what you're saying makes complete sense. And so hospitality is all about creating an experience. And whether it's the Hyatt experiences we're sitting in right now, where I texted them from my hotel room last night and said, can I get a late checkout? And about 30 seconds later, sure, Dr. Weinstein, we appreciate your request. I hope you're enjoying your stay. It's holy sugar. I, and I did that two nights previously in Phoenix. And when I checked in, here's the sidebar to that. When I checked in, they said, no, we couldn't give you a late checkout. So I texted them the next morning and I said, can I get a 1 o'clock check? Oh, sure. Absolutely not a problem at all.

**0:20:53.6 Peter Weinstein:** So face to face, they read the party line online. The person who was looking to give me an experience said, absolutely not a problem. We need to say absolutely not a problem more often and less. Let me find my manager or the rule book. And we've done that for long. So way too long. If you're in a service industry, solve the freaking problem, don't create new ones. Sorry, sidebar, 15 minutes of information you didn't need.

**0:21:22.0 Katie Berlin:** I think that's a great example though, because I want to have that experience face to face. I don't actually expect somebody to go the extra mile over a text message. I'm expecting a bot or like someone in India to answer my text message. If I'm texting a big company, especially, but like if I'm face to face with someone and they can give me a moment, I think Debbie called it creating a delightful moment for people, like empowering your team members to create that delightful moment for people that could make your entire week different. And I was checking in here actually. And the person he was a very sweet guy.

**0:21:56.8 Katie Berlin:** I think his name was Ian. Shout out to Ian for great manner at the front desk. He was well, you're going to get a wonderful room. It's a corner King. It's up on the 28th floor. It's beautiful. The view is incredible, but it's not quite ready yet. If you want to go grab a drink at the bar or something, and then we'll text you when it's ready. I was I'm going to get a great room. I wasn't Oh my God, my room's not ready. I'm so tired. I was Oh, I can go get a drink and I'm going to have this corner room. And then three and a half hours went by.

[laughter]

**0:22:27.0 Katie Berlin:** And I went up to the front desk and Ian was not there anymore. And the poor person who was there had to deal with me being I thought it was just going to be a few minutes? And she was wonderful. And she gave me a different room, which also was a corner King and it was fine. Everything was great. It is a beautiful room, but I would have probably appreciated either the truth or a text message within a few minutes?

**0:22:52.3 Peter Weinstein:** So let me play off of that.

**0:22:54.5 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:22:55.2 Peter Weinstein:** Let's say you're a client in a veterinary hospital and you come in and you're the only one in the lobby except the receptionist, the greeter. And they say we'll be with you in a few minutes. And a few minutes becomes 10 and 15 and 20. And they didn't say, go have a drink in the bar. Your room will be ready shortly.

**0:23:15.1 Katie Berlin:** You're sitting in a waiting room.



**0:23:15.2 Peter Weinstein:** You're sitting in a waiting room, which is such a bad term. Why do we call it a waiting room? Because we define it as the fact that you're going to have to freak and sit on your butt and wait.

**0:23:23.1 Katie Berlin:** Right. Or you're in your car, which is also not fun.

**0:23:26.7 Peter Weinstein:** No, no. Well, and I think more Tesla chargers were installed in veterinary practice during COVID because of that four to eight hour wait.

**0:23:36.9 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:23:37.0 Peter Weinstein:** But why aren't we communicating in the same way that Ian kind of dropped the ball and it probably wasn't Ian's fault because he had 43 other people to deal with after you.

**0:23:48.4 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:23:49.2 Peter Weinstein:** But there should have been some sort of automated cue or something else that basically tapped you on the phone or the shoulder and updated it. Well, there is no reason that a client service person in a veterinary hospital can't turn and say, Hey Katie, Dr. Weinstein's dealing with an emergency. We know you've been here for 15 minutes. Here are your choices to make it more convenient. You can drop off Bluto and we'll take care of things and you can pick them up a little bit later. You can reschedule and come back at another time and we will give you a 50% discount on your next visit.

**0:24:19.7 Peter Weinstein:** But what we're trying to do for you is make your experience go from to, Oh, that's so sweet of you, Crystal. Why don't I just drop off Bluto? I gotta go do some shopping over here at CVS and mother's market or whatever the case may be and solve the problem. But we too often create more problems by being afraid to go tell Katie why they're waiting. And all Katie does is start to get daggerized.

**0:24:47.9 Katie Berlin:** Yes. I was delighted when I checked when I did the pre check-in thing and he told me I was going to get a great room and that delight would have carried over if I'd gotten some update text messages I'm sorry, it's taking a little longer than we thought. We had a big volume of check-ins or whatever. I would have been fine because I was happy sitting on the deck, but I thought they'd forgotten me. And I think we do that to clients a lot, especially when they're in the car if they're sitting in the waiting room looking at you, at least they're there, but then it's like even more insulting somehow to not be talked to. So they're looking right at you.

**0:25:19.5 Katie Berlin:** And I, like I knew he hadn't forgotten about me because I was with two friends who also then at some point got their room notifications on their phones. But the fact was we were all waiting for a very long time. Even just saying we're going to give you a \$20 credit at the bar would have been cool. So I think that's a great a great point. And you wrote a book about managing veterinary practice and you are not afraid to ruffle feathers and talking about I know you were one of the ones who initially, like when the pandemic came and everyone was waiting in their cars and you were yeah, why do we even have waiting rooms? Just get rid of it. And everyone's what?

**0:26:00.4 Katie Berlin:** But I agree with you. No one's using them. People were happier. They could get a coupon to Starbucks, go get a coffee and come back? And in you, like you have a saying that basically encompasses why you should take yourself off the floor sometimes, like watch the processes in your practice and take some time away from being a doctor or manager or whatever, and actually just sit down and think about what do we need to make better? And how can we do that? What's that saying?

**0:26:27.0 Peter Weinstein:** One G.

**0:26:28.6 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:26:30.2 Peter Weinstein:** Work on, not just in, One G, and in a, as a business owner and actually as a manager, when you are so deeply embedded in the day-to-day operations of your practice, you rarely know what it looks like in your waiting rooms, reception area. You come in the back door, you go out the back door. You avoid the front because you don't want to get hogtied by a client who wants to say, Hey doc, how you doing?

**0:27:00.5 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:27:00.8 Katie Berlin:** So you have to pull yourself out of the business physically and mentally and take a look at your business from 35,000 feet and figure out what the big picture looks like. How close are you coming to the vision that you had? Are you living your mission? Are you living your values? So working on your business means stopping the technical work that we do every day in our businesses and thinking about how close our business is coming to the dream that we had when we opened it. That also assumes that you actually had a vision or a dream and you didn't just open a business to make hamburgers and you're making hamburgers, but you have no clue how, what the hamburgers taste like.

**0:27:50.6 Katie Berlin:** This AHA podcast is brought to you by CareCredit. CareCredit understands that all veterinary teams are busier than ever to help patients get the care they need. The CareCredit health and pet care credit card allows clients to access a budget-friendly financing experience anytime, from anywhere on their own smart device. They can learn, see if they prequalify apply and even pay if approved, all on that smart device. With just a tap, they have a friendly, contactless way to pay over time for the services and treatments their pet needs, whether it be a general, referring, or specialty hospital, as long as they accept the CareCredit credit card.

**0:28:30.6 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. Know what the hamburgers taste like. It's another piece of merch right there. It's another sticker. Yeah. I have a copy of your book, which I think you wrote that in it because I won it in a contest. I sometimes will think about that when it comes to culture, just any place that I work, because it is so easy to get caught up in the little stuff every day and not think about that. These are really good message. The theme of this conference, 2023's AHA Con, very first AHA Con, the theme is level up. What does leveling up look to Peter Weinstein?

**0:29:09.8 Peter Weinstein:** So before I get to leveling up, I will get to it, I promise you.

**0:29:13.1 Katie Berlin:** Okay.

**0:29:15.4 Peter Weinstein:** Every year in San Diego, they host Comic-Con.

**0:29:20.5 Katie Berlin:** Yes. I hear it's getting too big for San Diego now.

**0:29:25.8 Peter Weinstein:** Well, when I told my wife I was going to AHA Con, she said, bad, bad, bad. Unless everybody's going to be wearing a costume, it's just not the same. I said, these are veterinarians, they live in a costume.

**0:29:36.6 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. That's a good point. Yeah.

**0:29:39.2 Peter Weinstein:** Next year, AHA Con, which I believe is going to be in DC, don't miss it. Next year, AHA Con, Washington DC.

**0:29:46.5 Katie Berlin:** Yes.

**0:29:49.6 Peter Weinstein:** Everybody should come dressed as their favorite president or some other politician because it's in DC. It's not going to... I'm probably going to get myself into trouble for saying all of this. It's not just about the veterinary experience. It's about how you get dressed up and they will have a costume contest next year for the best dressed veterinary team member who comes dressed up as a politician to Washington DC. Okay. Getting back to leveling up.

**0:30:15.4 Katie Berlin:** I'm not in charge of that. I think it's a great idea, but it's not me who's going to have to pull it off. So that's why I think it's great.

**0:30:21.4 Peter Weinstein:** Good luck, Jessica.

**0:30:22.5 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. We're not going to edit that out.

**0:30:26.9 Peter Weinstein:** So leveling up.

**0:30:28.6 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:30:28.9 Katie Berlin:** What do I think about leveling up? Leveling up to me is like being in an elevator and you go from floor to floor to floor, ultimately reaching the top level. So I think each person as an individual should be looking to grow 1% per day, just a little bit, just a small growth in some fashion. There is a thought, not for me, but the difference between water at 211 degrees and water at 212 degrees, if I've got that right, is the difference between water and steam. And we have found that steam can be very useful. Water can be useful too in terms of energy generation.

**0:31:27.7 Peter Weinstein:** So all I'm suggesting to level up individually or in a business or in a career is just to look to make constant improvement every day, to aspire to a new level every day. So whether it is that 16-year-old, I want to be a veterinarian because I read James Herriot, kennel kid, or the associate who decides they want to become an owner, or the customer service person who goes back and gets some courses in business and wants to become a practice manager or a CVPM, I think it's the role, the responsibility of every business owner to help their team level up each day, every day, all the time.

**0:32:23.8 Katie Berlin:** Otherwise, you are providing people with a job and not a career, and I

think that's one of the biggest problems we have in this profession. It's not that we need more people. We need to do a better job of keeping the people that we have by giving them opportunities to grow, contribute, get better, give them the respect that they deserve, give them more responsibility, and give them recognition for all of the things that they have done to make your business successful. Because ladies and gentlemen, we don't do it by ourselves. This is a team. It's the only way we can do veterinary medicine.

**0:32:53.2 Katie Berlin:** That's a mic drop right there, and that's true no matter what that role is. If a kennel assistant wants to stay a kennel assistant, there's nothing wrong with that. It doesn't mean they can't grow within that job and assume more responsibility and learn more skills, and I think that's been such a valuable lesson from really good leaders that I've seen and also from leaders I've had and worked for that weren't that great. That was the difference, was they were invested or not in helping me and the people around me, even because I never wanted to be an owner. A lot of times people thought that meant I didn't want to work. I just didn't want to do that work, and I think that's a really big point.

**0:33:37.7 Peter Weinstein:** Yeah, you're hiring a seed.

**0:33:41.7 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:33:43.2 Peter Weinstein:** You're planting it. Now it's up to you to add water and a whole lot of fertilizer, because in this profession we have no shortage of fertilizer.

**0:33:52.7 Katie Berlin:** That's right.

**0:33:53.8 Peter Weinstein:** And by giving them some sunlight, some water, some fertilizer, growing that seed into a mighty oak or a redwood or whatever it wants to be. It could be a weed, but I think sometimes we pick the weeds and sometimes we pick bad seeds, and sometimes we have to figure out which are the right seeds and which are the weeds that we actually need because they provide energy, some sort of nitrates to the cement, not to the cement, to the soil in which they're growing.

**0:34:21.7 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. Also cement. I've seen weeds come up through places that weeds should not be, and that's very inspiring to me. I work for a, I live in a rental house and the landlord, like in my lease contract, it says I have to spray for weeds. I hate doing that because I think weeds are really cool. They're so resilient. The fact that I have to spray again because they just keep trying to pop up through the rock beds. I don't want to kill those. They're my buds.

**0:34:50.8 Peter Weinstein:** And you think about the term growing like a weed, which we use for our kids and for our puppies and everything else. There's nothing in there that says killing like a weed. It's we should be helping the weeds grow.

**0:35:02.2 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. I don't want to die like a weed because someone's don't want you here.

**0:35:06.2 Peter Weinstein:** Yeah. So we have to figure out ways to make weeds, live symbiotically with weeds because they can contribute in some way, shape or form to the environment. And you don't know what that seed is going to grow up into when you get it. You just

get the seed in and it's up to you to make sure that it grows to whatever its capabilities and capacities are. Don't limit the sun. Don't limit the water and don't limit the fertilizer.

**0:35:31.2 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. No danger there.

**0:35:33.2 Peter Weinstein:** No danger there. That's okay.

**0:35:35.1 Katie Berlin:** Okay. So last question, because we're going to, we're recording this before National Veterinary Technician Week and our first AHA Technician Utilization Guidelines are coming out October 1st. Very exciting. They're going to be in Trends Magazine and online. And so this will come out after that, but I still want to make sure to give technicians a shout out. So do you have a team or individual credential technicians that you'd like to shout out while we're here?

**0:36:01.5 Peter Weinstein:** I'd like to shout out to every credential technician. And I don't, my practice, I haven't been in 20 plus years. Many of the credential technicians I still stay in touch with, but my bottom line is the following. And I mentioned it a little bit earlier. Veterinary medicine is a team sport. We are like the rowboat with eight people in it. One's the doctor or the manager at the front, who's the coxswain that says stroke, but in between are a whole bunch of team people. Once of more is a credential technician. If we truly want to move this profession forward, it can't be via a doctor-centric business model. It needs to be a team-based business model whereby we utilize our credential techs to the top of their job descriptions, whatever it is in your state.

**0:36:53.7 Peter Weinstein:** And we respect them for the fact that they have become credentialed and that we don't give non-credential people the same responsibilities. I would suggest you give them the same respect because they have tremendous amount of skills from that standpoint, but we have to start giving our credential technicians the opportunity to grow and contribute and generate income. It's interesting. How many veterinarians actually have a line item for a credential technician who does a tech exam or even who does a dental prophylaxis?

**0:37:29.6 Katie Berlin:** So we don't even track how much income our credential technicians are generating for us. But if you go to the dentist, there's a line item for the hygienist and the work that they do. So honestly, we need to start to give greater respect to our credential technicians by letting them do what they can do. And you need to make sure that you have identified their skill sets and that you trust them to perform up to the level that they have been trained. And then recognize them through line items, through identifying them to your clients by introducing, hey, this is Patty. She's my credential technician.

**0:38:11.2 Peter Weinstein:** She's my right-hand person. She'll actually be your point person going forward. She's going to give you her business card with her cell phone. Not her cell phone.

**0:38:23.4 Katie Berlin:** Every technician listening was just this is going so well.

**0:38:25.6 Peter Weinstein:** Gotcha. No, she's going to give you her phone number and extension here at the hospital. She'll give you her email address here at the hospital, and she will be your point person for any questions or concerns that you may have. So this is Patty. We have three other credential technicians that you'll have a chance to meet. Most of the time you'll be visiting with Patty. Why do we take 30-minute appointments and have 28 minutes of the doctor?

**0:38:53.0 Peter Weinstein:** If we could use our credential technicians or assistants, depending upon the skill sets and the state boards and what they can or cannot do, to do the work, our doctors can have more time to do the three things or four things depending on your state, that they must do by law. Diagnose, prescribe, and do surgery. Everything beyond that can be done by a credential tech. Everything beyond that should be done by a credential tech. And there's nothing in the practice act that says the veterinary needs to go to Costco, but we do.

**0:39:23.9 Katie Berlin:** I'm just picturing my boss taking huge things of paper towels out of the back of his forerunner.

**0:39:29.2 Peter Weinstein:** Yeah, exactly. But leaving six of them in the forerunner to bring home.

**0:39:33.8 Katie Berlin:** Right, that's true, yeah.

**0:39:34.2 Peter Weinstein:** So bottom line, we need to have a greater understanding of how to integrate our credential technicians into the client experience so that the clients can have trust in everybody on the team and that it is not all based upon the doctor, but it's based upon everybody on that boat all rowing together with the common goal of providing a world-class individualized client experience and patient experience.

**0:40:02.2 Katie Berlin:** You just keep dropping the mic, so I think I'm just going to leave it there. That was exactly, exactly what I was hoping you'd say, because I think there are a lot of people that still need to hear it. We hear it a lot, and we need to hear it from all corners. And I really appreciate that you're a champion for that team-based approach, because I tell you what, like once you work with credential techs who know their job, are allowed to do their job, and I mean they ran that clinic like a ship, then you can't go back, and you realize there's no reason to ever, ever, ever go back.

**0:40:33.2 Peter Weinstein:** Absolutely. Big high five on that.

**0:40:34.7 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. Well, Peter Weinstein, thank you so much for taking time out of your day to come by. I've been looking forward to talking to you for a long time on Central Line. I really appreciate it, and hopefully we'll get a chance to do this again.

**0:40:47.8 Peter Weinstein:** Thank you, Katie Berlin. I appreciate the invitation. It's always fun to sit here and podcast with you. I would say BS, but I could probably say that.

**0:40:55.8 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, you could say that.

**0:40:56.5 Peter Weinstein:** It's always fun, and thank you for the opportunity. Thank you to AHA for having a platform where people can share different thoughts and different ideas.

**0:41:05.2 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. Love it. Thanks to all of you for listening and watching. Catch you next time on Central Line.