

0:00:04.1 Katie Berlin: Hi, welcome back to Central Line. This is Katie Berlin. I have Dr. Julie Buzby here with me today. And Dr. Julie is a really special guest because, it was her podcast that I was on as my very first podcasting experience. And clearly I caught the bug because there's been a lot of podcasting since then. And we were in your closet in, your hotel room at the Westin Point set in Greenville, [laughter], South Carolina. And I was like, this is great. Like, I will absolutely podcast at closet [laughter] So, I really appreciated that opportunity and I, feel like we're coming full circle here. Julie, welcome to Central Line.

0:00:45.2 Julie Buzby: Thank you. It's so great. It's so fun to not having to not have to be maneuvering around the ironing board or the iron [laughter] and the robe. Yeah. Fabulous.

0:00:54.6 Katie Berlin: Yeah. And it's funny 'cause since then I have also podcasted from the Western Point set in Greenville, with some people that we both know. And, I was not in a closet, but my closet was much smaller than yours. So it was a fortunate incident that you had that, that walk-in at the time. [laughter] or sit-in [laughter] Anyway, Julie, would you mind giving our watchers and listeners a little background on yourself and what it is you're passionate about?

0:01:22.3 Julie Buzby: Yeah, so I'm a veterinarian. I graduated from Kansas State University in 1997. Super long time ago. I had worked for Equine veterinarians all through high school and vet school, and they did chiropractic and acupuncture in addition to just a traditional full service Equine practice. And I was always the one holding the horse and watching them respond and listening to the riders. So I was fully, on board with integrative practice and soon after graduation, got certified through the American Veterinary Chiropractic Association and, did certification in acupuncture through IVUS. And so that's been a...

0:01:56.2 Katie Berlin: Oh same.

0:01:57.9 Julie Buzby: Part of my, ah, so that's been a part of my practice. Love having just more tools in my toolbox. I wanted zero kids. I don't even like kids [laughter], but, God had other plans and I have eight kids. And I also, never wanted to own a business because I'm a, I, like, I love it when everybody's happy and I love handing out the bonuses, but I'm non-confrontational and not good as a boss. So I didn't wanna own my own business, but I own my own practice for almost 10 years. And now through a crazy turn of events, I have a business, that's sort of related to the veterinary industry. And so that's what I do to stay busy.

0:02:37.2 Katie Berlin: And there's a little thing on the side you do, where a lot of moms come together and do what looks like amazing things and have just a really incredible time. Can you talk about that a little?

0:02:49.9 Julie Buzby: Yes, I'm very blessed to sort of have that as a passion project, being a mom to eight and being a vet of 20 some years, I just feel like so many of the things I see specifically mom, vets go through are things that I can relate to. I've been there, I've cried those tears, I've lost those nights of sleep, and I'm like, oh, having the perspective of hindsight and looking back on that, like, oh, like it's gonna be okay, really, but in the moment I know it doesn't feel like it. So, not that I, by any means, like I wanna say like that I know everything or that I'm like the perfect, role model or confidant, I'm none of those things. But I, my heart is for these women. And so during COVID, just seeing the isolation that all of us were experiencing and thinking like, what can I do specifically

for this group of women who I love?

0:03:43.4 Julie Buzby: I'm like, we should do a conference. But it was during COVID and so nobody was really thinking about conferences. It gave us a long lead time to plan. So we had 18 months to plan the veterinarian encouragement conference for moms. And the vision was, yes, we're gonna have CE and Jessica Vogelsang was one of our speakers, and it was like the best CE we had like such a phenomenal speaker lineup, but really the goal was encouragement and focus on community. And many of the moms left saying it was more like a retreat than a conference. And I was like, really happy with that analysis of it. 'Cause that was my goal just to, just for people to realize, even though we may feel alone because of the Venn diagram that we share as veterinarians, certainly, but even as veterinarians and moms even more so, it's kind of like this sliver that even though we're all over the world really, and in different walks of life, different ages, different places, like we still really understand each other's life very uniquely. So that's what I wanted to kinda bring together.

0:04:46.1 Katie Berlin: I love that. And I've heard nothing but amazing things about the conference, like people, 'cause we know a lot of the same people on in social media and stuff, and so I see their, their posts and I just, they just look like their cup is full. And they get a chance to, really just embrace all the aspects of themselves at once, which is so hard. I'm not a mom, but I see that in people I'm very close to at that I've worked alongside in the clinic, that they're just torn in two directions or more all the time. And, I love the idea of just being able to embrace all of that, in one place and feel like you're in solidarity with all these other people who understand deeply and that's something I think we all discovered that we needed during COVID, not just moms. So I love that, and I hope you can keep doing it for a long, long time because it looks like you're, you're doing good for a lot, a lot of moms.

0:05:45.7 Julie Buzby: It's been a huge blessing for me. I mean, it's what, that kind of thing where you're like, oh, let me do this to be helpful, but you're the one who gets the most out of it. It's been fabulous.

0:05:51.7 Katie Berlin: Yeah. It's funny how that works out. [laughter], okay, so, you have the conference, you have ToeGrips, which is the business that you referred to. So Dr. Buzby's ToeGrips, anybody who works in a clinic where they carry these, this is the Dr. Buzby and I was so excited to figure that out. I was like, wait, Dr. Buzby is a person, and she's Julie, and she's like, so normal. It's like, I feel like you always think of products like from way back when that were like Dr. So-and-so's like tincture of whatever. And I always think of like this old dude in a three piece suit, and like a black, like a lithograph. And, Dr. Buzby's ToeGrips is not like that [laughter] So you have that business, you ran a vet clinic, you have eight kids. There's a lot, you, there's a lot of layers to you but you're always wearing some kind of hat in those layers. You're like a business owner or you're the boss, you're the mom, you're the person who's like shepherding all the cats. Is there a place that you can go where you're just Julie and you don't have to be, have a title?

0:06:57.0 Julie Buzby: That's a great question, and I'm gonna say no in the sense that like, my life doesn't really allow time where I can just go.

0:07:10.2 Katie Berlin: When you're sleeping. Is that? [laughter]

0:07:12.7 Julie Buzby: Yes. Which isn't much. But the good news is I'm, so, I really, every day is

full of challenges. I mean, just before we started the recording, I was talking about my car overheating. And, I've got rear-ended and like, there's just so many, like life is completely full of challenges, but, we, you've heard it said it's like how we handle them, right? That's and I strive to take it in stride because we are so blessed. And when we look at the big perspective, like, okay, I got rear-ended. Okay, my, I have to believe, like it's gonna be okay. So I really am thankful to be at a place, and I was not always here, but I'm in a place where I'm just content in my life. So I really, and I'm not saying that this is for everybody and I certainly advocate recharging your batteries, but what I'm saying is like, my battery recharging is part of my everyday life.

0:08:08.7 Julie Buzby: So just picking up my dog and like cuddling him for five minutes, like that's me time, ToeGrips actually, when I work with that business and my team, it's like so fulfilling for me because I get to use my creative side of my brain and I get, I'm a massive extrovert, so I get to work with this phenomenal team, and we're planning a big trade show season, so I know I'll be like working with people and seeing people. And so all of these things that are just a part of my daily schedule are a place where I find comfort and rest and fulfillment. Even though it may be from the outside looking in, it just looks like the everyday grind. So I'm thankful for that.

0:08:53.1 Katie Berlin: That's wonderful on that, that's really a good point to make that like everybody's version of a happy, balanced life. 'Cause balance is so relative, and for some people, balance could look like a complete absence of balance for other people. And I hear a lot about boundaries now, and when I was in practice, and I'm sure you can relate to this a little bit, I felt like boundaries are super important. Like, if every client had your cell phone number or could reach you on social media, that was gonna be a disaster. And at the same time, and in the exam room even, there was sort of a professional boundary even if you were very open with your clients. But now that I'm out of practice, I feel like I've had coworkers say to me like, is there ever a time where you're not working?

0:09:41.9 Katie Berlin: And I don't, because I would be like on social media looking up stuff about what's going on, or I'd be on VIN reading, like what people are talking about or whatever. And to me, that doesn't feel like work at all. It might help my job, but it does not feel like work, like, this does not feel like work to me. This is a crazy job that I get to do this. And so, I think boundaries are all just really relative. And if you're happy in your life, then it doesn't matter what anyone else's ideas and boundaries are. Or of like you time. 'Cause you time could actually be the same time that you're doing something for someone else.

0:10:17.5 Julie Buzby: Yeah, that's a fantastic point. And I think we have to be careful about how we judge other people. Even with boundaries in veterinary medicine, there are some people who want to have a more personal relationship with clients. And if that is what fulfills them and allows them to sleep well at night and they, they're receiving back from that, then like you said, boundaries are different. We just did a survey in the veterinary mom Facebook group about, it was just an informal thing that someone asked, like, what do you wanna be called? And I have always been called in practice Dr. Julie. And that was a minority, like most people wanted to be called, if I'm recalling correctly, like doctor, their last name. There was the respect and the authority and what went along with that and certainly well earned and it just, it was just interesting to me that we had different perspectives on that. So I think that's a really great point to recognize that we all bring our own individual personalities, values, experiences, and the walks gonna be a little bit, even though we, there are so many things that we share in common, the walk is a little bit different for everybody and we can support each other in that.

0:11:27.9 Katie Berlin: Yeah. It's one of the things that makes it cool. Right. Okay, so one of the things that I wanted to talk about today with you was seeing your dogs because, aha, it's been several, a few months now. It's like almost the end of the year. And senior, our, senior care guidelines for dogs and cats came out in January. And it's a guideline that incorporates a lot of, different aspects of the human animal bond in there. So when you're dealing with senior pets, you're dealing with like a lot of memories and emotional attachment. And fear of judgment and like the really bittersweetness of watching your pet age. And it just, that those nuances make senior care a special art, I feel like, and ToeGrips. I feel like with ToeGrips, they're a small product that like, sometimes you won't even notice that they're on the pet right away. And at the same time they can make such a huge difference. Can you talk a little bit about like, if you have a special love for senior pets and what motivated you to, to make this your business?

0:12:36.6 Julie Buzby: Yes. So because I was certified in chiropractic and acupuncture, I already had this scene. I did see other patients. I mean, I had a dog fly in for repro work, etcetera, etcetera. But mostly it was senior patients, that were coming from mobility and pain management. And so that was already the population that I was seeing. And you nailed it. I mean, the thing that really, for me, just being an extrovert and being just as much a lover of people as animals, the reason I was like so drawn to this group is because the people had this lifetime of stories with this animal where this dog was there when their husband died and was their number one source of companionship and comfort. And just like there in their darkest moments, or was their son's dog who, and their son, they lost their son.

0:13:30.3 Julie Buzby: I mean, these stories aren't rare because they've lived more than a decade with this dog. And life progresses at this rapid, crazy breakneck speed and things happen. And so the dog has been through these milestones, maybe a divorce where the dog was, was the person who was for them more, more than a human. And so I just like, just honoring that relationship. It's almost like a sacred relationship where this is this is their anchor in their life. And they, one of the ladies, this was a situation where this golden retriever had been there through her husband's long bout with cancer and passing away, and now the dog was like 15. And she said, I would eat dog food every day to pay for whatever this dog needed. This, if this dog needs thousands of dollars of referral care, I'm gonna find a way to make that happen because this dog is everything to me. So, I mean, just like, it makes me wanna cry thinking about how special these animals are. And I mean, of course, like also just they get older and they're just, they just tend to be mellow and sweet and like innocent and like little lambs.

0:14:39.7 Katie Berlin: Unless you're my chihuahua [laughter]

0:14:42.7 Julie Buzby: So. I...

0:14:45.1 Katie Berlin: You're still spicy [laughter]

0:14:46.1 Julie Buzby: Spicy and saucy. Yes.

[laughter]

0:14:49.8 Julie Buzby: Yeah. I mean, for the most, like they have their own merit and specialness. And then there's the special, the layer of what they represent to the family. So I was doing

chiropractic, acupuncture, Chinese herbs, and then being integrative and also prescribing Western medications, I really felt like, okay, I've got a good handle on, I feel like I can offer things. And often people would come as a last resort, like, I can't, we need help or this dog's gonna get put to sleep. And so I am like, okay, good. We've got tools in the toolbox. Let's, we've got like please have hope. We've got some things we can try. And then I would work with their regular vet and we would coordinate care. So the thing that I could never really impact was slipping. 'Cause slipping is a biomechanical problem.

0:15:33.7 Julie Buzby: And I would tell people to line their house literally with yoga mats or carpet runners, and that works. The problem is these dogs often run hot, they're yin deficient and Chinese medicine and they're running hot and they like to go lie on the cold hard floors. And then they have to get up off the cold hard floors. So ToeGrips are traction that travels, they can go anywhere, including to the vet's office and have the security and the traction that they need. So there's the physical component of being able to move well, but also there's the emotional component of the confidence that that means for the dog.

0:16:08.7 Katie Berlin: Absolutely. And there's something so, so horrible about just watching your dog. Like, you're like sprinting across the room to try to help them up on this smooth floor and you're like, please sleep on the bed. I got you. Like, please. But you're right, they don't want to, I mean, well my dog wants to because he's tiny and he's cold when it's like below 75. But yeah, chihuahuas are different. They barely are dogs. They're like a, another species entirely. But, generally speaking, we're talking a lot of older dogs, especially like, I'm thinking about the big labs, that are just like panting all the time and they're, half of them have laryngeal paralysis and gulp, and they just, ugh. So it's really, watching dogs come in with the ToeGrips on and being able to just like get up and walk across the practice floor, that was pretty cool, that was pretty cool. And people would be like, oh my God, like why didn't I do this before [laughter]? And it might be something that people don't even notice, right. Because it's, it's come on so slowly.

0:17:08.7 Julie Buzby: Yes. That is, I think one of the problems that we have as a company is people recognize that pain point so late. And so they're searching, they find us and their dog might use ToeGrips for weeks sometimes, I mean, it's not uncommon for us to get returned because the people say, the customer says, my dog passed away just while they were shipping and we do fast shipping, so it's very sad. So that's one of the things that we're trying to educate on and that's on us as a company is like, it's time for ToeGrips is way earlier than people think before. It's so bad that the dogs injured themselves falling or they're splayed stuck, under the kitchen table on the linoleum floor, or they've lost confidence and started to isolate themselves from the family. That's another realistic thing is they're not engaged. Because there's fear in just roaming their home.

0:18:04.8 Katie Berlin: Yeah. You, I'm thinking about that woman who said she would eat dog food, to pay for her senior dog's care. And like, same, same. And also, I always joke, joked with my clients that I would give my dog a kidney if that were biologically possible. And he needed one. I mean, he's like the size of my kidney. So it's clearly like no matter what, science hap that wouldn't happen. But the point was like, if I, if I could do it, I would, 'cause he's my little dude. And, at the same time when I would be in practice and we sold ToeGrips and I'd be talking about them to people, there was some resistance on their part. Why do you think that people resist something that's like a lower cost, no side effects item when if you give them a pill, they're nine times outta 10, you're gonna be like, yeah, I'll try that.

0:19:00.0 Julie Buzby: Well, I think one is just perception, right? I mean, people are going to go with what they know and extrapolate from human medicine. And unfortunately, we just have the quick, easy fix, the microwave solution of take these pills. So that's very comfortable for them because it's familiar. So even in dog traction, I think the go-to is like boots and socks. Well, dogs aren't people. Yes, there's a place for boots and socks with ice or heat or injury, but boots and socks have never been my go-to traction solution because they obliterate, appropriate, like they affect proprioception. There's so many receptors in the toes that they're just not able to even use. So I think that's one issue, is like people just didn't think about it. It was a whole new category of nail-based traction.

0:19:51.0 Katie Berlin: And then number two, they're so small. And like you alluded to, they just don't even look like much, but that's the beauty.

0:20:00.2 Katie Berlin: Yeah, right?

0:20:00.3 Julie Buzby: Like the best solution is like typically the simplest solution that still works. So they're simple, they're minimally obtrusive, and because they're just on the nail tips and they're not covering skin or soft tissue, dogs almost always, like very, very rarely is this an issue. They just don't even notice them.

0:20:17.1 Katie Berlin: Yeah, just for those who are listening, and this is not a commercial for ToeGrips. I just want to make sure, like Julie said, she didn't want to make this a commercial for ToeGrips, but I think it's important that we talk about them because they are sort of symbolic to me of so much of what we talk about when it comes to senior care, which is like the bond, how little things can make a huge difference, how like people can be really resistant to treatment and for all sorts of reasons, even if they love their dog so much. And so it's not a barometer of how much they love their dog, like how much they're saying yes to you. There's a blockage somewhere if they're not saying yes most of the time.

0:20:56.9 Katie Berlin: And ToeGrips are like these little caps. They're actually just like tubes, little tiny tubes, and they go on each nail and they basically make the, they're like little grippies, like those yoga socks with toes, except that they don't cover the foot. And so like each nail is going to have a little, a little ring around it when they're on. And they have to be sized properly or they'll fall off. Some dogs might have to be sedated to have them put on if they really hate having their nails done, but it's, that was super rare in my experience. Yeah. Like my...

0:21:28.7 Julie Buzby: [0:21:28.8] ____ the nail trims, I'll put it that way. Like a dog that hates nail trims, like they will mind ToeGrips less.

0:21:36.1 Katie Berlin: Yeah. I haven't tried them on my little guy 'cause he hasn't really had that issue yet, but he hates having, he has to be, he's a hundred years old and he has to be sedated for nail trims, like heavily. And there's spray cheese and like in his face and he's ugh, he's trying to still try to bite. And I think he probably would let me do this because he's, he lets me play with his nails. He just doesn't want them cut. And I didn't see very many cases where the technicians, the technicians usually place them because they're amazing and do better than me at pretty much everything. And they always just did it. And then the dog would go home and the owner would be oh, that's it.

0:22:17.9 Katie Berlin: And it was pretty cool to see that. And we'll put a link to them in the show notes. But Julie, the other thing that you had mentioned was that sometimes you get calls from people who or communications from people who are returning the ToeGrips now, like my dog passed away or whatever reason. And that's another thing I wanted to talk to you about 'cause you're known for your customer service and that's super important to you.

0:22:43.2 Julie Buzby: It is. And thank you for even calling that out because that's more important to me than anything else we could talk about. And it was the same when I owned a veterinary practice. There's a proverb that says a good name is worth far more than great riches. That's kind of my foundation thought, my mantra for how we run the company because ultimately our reputation just personally, like the value in that, but even as a business decision.

0:23:12.2 Julie Buzby: I never worried as a practice about the benchmark money aspect. I just thought, okay, a good name is worth far more than great riches. Let's do what it takes to have the great name and to take care of our customers and that they know, like the care for them and their pets is genuine. And it's like the foundation of everything we do. And then I practiced attempt, I tried my best to practice great thorough medicine and you combine those two. And I think you have success as a veterinarian, like it's a very successful lucrative practice.

0:23:48.2 Julie Buzby: For ToeGrips, same thing. I mean, in social media reviews, like it just makes me so happy to hear people say I bought a 30 some dollar product and they treated me like a million dollar customer. That was one of our reviews. I'm yes, that's, I want that. I want that for you. The world, I think we've gotten away from that with technology and sort of just our culture in general. But I think you can't go wrong with old fashioned customer service.

0:24:21.9 Katie Berlin: I agree. And you end up gaining a lot more than you would ever give away, even in accommodating a customer request that might cost you a little bit at that time. And this has reminded me so much of the conversations that I've had with Debbie Boone recently, where she's talking about Hospitality in Healthcare. So that's her book that was just published. And she's talking about the same, just like old fashioned hospitality in a vet practice, making sure a client is comfortable and informed. And you carry the bag of dog food out to the car or whatever. Like those things are so small and yet so big.

0:25:00.7 Katie Berlin: So, I mean, I still remember an interaction I had with a Zappos customer service representative, like 10 years ago, because they were so great to me on the phone. And I still remember that, like I don't even shop at Zappos very much, but if I do, I'm very confident. And I want that too, for people who are dealing with the business that I'm a part of.

0:25:23.4 Julie Buzby: I think it's really important, especially in this day and age of veterinary medicine to distinguish that that's not being a doormat. That doesn't mean you let clients bully you or bully your staff, absolutely not. But I think it really shows in communication, the respect of the way we communicate with our clients, and then just the importance of communication. So many issues can be proactively avoided, or if they're on the table, like calmly resolved with just good communication. I think like that's probably the number one recipe for great customer service.

0:26:02.8 Katie Berlin: Yes. Yeah. Have you ever been the person, like the client whose head was exploding, and you're okay, if they just treated this interaction a little differently, I would not be feeling like my head is gonna explode right now?

0:26:22.4 Julie Buzby: Yes. So I was just rear-ended, I told you that. And I had no intention of getting a lawyer, because I don't, I just don't, my sister's a lawyer, like God bless the lawyers, but that's not who I am, and that's not who I wanna be. I just am just get my car fixed. It's gonna be okay. I could not get the other insurance company to call me back for 13 days.

0:26:44.8 Katie Berlin: What?

0:26:45.4 Julie Buzby: 13, after about day eight of calling, calling, calling, no communication, I'm like "I'm getting a lawyer", not because I'm suing anybody or any of that, but I just need someone to help me with this communication, because I can't even, we're not having communication. So there was a prime example of this insurance company is gonna end up paying more money, because now they're gonna pay his fees and fix my car, et cetera. Had they just respectfully communicated with me off the bat and transparently, they would have saved so much money, but they just obviously have some problems in their processes that they were not on the ball. So I think that's, to me, that's the example of I didn't wanna get a lawyer, but you can't not talk to me. You can't, I don't know what the... I have no idea.

0:27:36.3 Julie Buzby: And for our clients, we have this curse of knowledge in veterinary medicine where we're in it every day. We understand the surgery discharges, like we do the surgeries for heaven's sakes. We understand the tape where the catheter was. We got it. They don't, it can be overwhelming and confusing and we're dealing with this precious entity in their life and they have questions. And so again, being courteous and thorough and respecting their questions because they're important to them and being timely, I think is all really important.

0:28:06.6 Julie Buzby: And that kind of goes into this whole thing of like using our staff, training our staff. It doesn't have to be coming from us. I think it's much more important that we're timely in communication with anybody in the practice than okay, the doctor's gonna call you back in four days, so.

0:28:22.2 Katie Berlin: Yes. Oh my gosh, car stuff, it's the worst because you have no control, like no control at all. And you can't, it's not like you could just go to another insurance company. The insurance company that was gonna cover your bills was the insurance company that was gonna cover your bills. So you had no choice, you just gotta wait. And that, I'm glad you got a lawyer and I'm sorry that that happened. For me, it was always a pharmacy. I, for some reason, when I lived in Texas specifically, I just had the biggest issues getting a prescription filled at the Albertsons pharmacy in Dallas. And I remember going in a couple of times and I'm like conscious. We didn't say Karen back then. And I try not to say that anyway because my mom's name was Karen. But I was being, yeah, I was like that person. And I was like conscious of it. But it was just, it was just so many times around. And I'm I don't understand why this is so hard. And no one is explaining it to me and they're acting like I'm being a problem.

0:29:21.1 Katie Berlin: And then I became a problem. Not proud, also highly avoidable. And I had worked with a vet that called it puffer fishing, where you're just you're going about your business and you come to this crossroads basically, which is you're going to Albertsons for the 50th time and they still don't have the thing filled.

0:29:41.5 Katie Berlin: And they could have had it filled or they could have treated you well and

you could have just gone about your day. And instead, there was like a bad interaction. And then your head is just poof, just like spiny and poisonous suddenly, like a puffer fish. And it was just that is exactly what happened. And that's where so much, I think of the negative client interactions we have come from is it just was gonna take that one little thing and then that client puffer fishes and it's too late to make it not happen, so.

0:30:13.8 Julie Buzby: I have a proverb for that one too. So when I teach my team and they're just so wonderfully, naturally great. I mean, I just love my team so much. So this wasn't a revelation because this is really their character, but there's another proverb that says, a gentle answer turns away wrath. And I love that because there are times over the years, I mean, I was customer service for ToeGrips for the first two years. I mean, I was answering the emails, I was fielding it all. And it was rare, but if we had somebody who was puffer fished, fired up, I like 99.99% of the time, this works. If I would just listen and show empathy without admitting guilt, if there wasn't any, but take responsibility for what I needed to and just be gentle, instantly their tone would come down and we could have a logical conversation and accomplish something.

0:31:10.6 Katie Berlin: Yeah, you just wanna be treated like your opinion is important and like your time and experience are important. And it's very hard to be rude to somebody who's being really genuinely nice to you.

0:31:25.3 Julie Buzby: That's a great point.

0:31:27.1 Katie Berlin: So, I mean, people still manage it, but for most of us, it's hard. You're oh, I'm being that person now.

0:31:35.4 CareCredit: 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.

0:32:12.8 Katie Berlin: Okay, so you mentioned your team. You have a lot going on in your life. Do you have help? You have a team that helps you with ToeGrips, so you're not customer service anymore. You have eight kids that you homeschool. Do you have help doing those things, and kind of so you don't have to be 12 places at once?

0:32:32.0 Julie Buzby: Yes, so I completely believe that it takes a village, and I think many of us as veterinarians are we can do it all, we're the super people, but we're not, or at least I'm not. So yeah. I mean, get help where you can get it. In the beginning, I couldn't afford help. ToeGrips, I was wearing 92 hats. My husband and I were shipping ToeGrips off of our kitchen table. But as we grew...

0:33:00.0 Katie Berlin: I love that, though.

0:33:00.8 Julie Buzby: It was that classic, just the start of those small business, but as we grew and we were able to hire people, that was such a gift, not only to free up time, but also to make us more

efficient and more scalable. So in my personal life, yes, my husband's very much involved, and I had someone in my life, Brittany, for a decade. So she wanted to be a homeschool mom someday. Wasn't really sure what she wanted to do professionally, and so she came, and she was married, but her husband worked a lot, and so she spent a ton of time with her family, and she worked for us.

0:33:38.9 Julie Buzby: And the cool thing is, through that interaction and through probably watching me suture my children on the kitchen table and a variety of other first aid needs, because I've got six boys who are always doing crazy stuff in the yard, she decided she was going to nursing school. So Brittany now is in nursing school, and the kids are also older, so we don't have anybody helping us at home as much, but it still feels like that village where I've got friends or neighbors who are picking somebody up or driving someone here, and I actually teach two days a week, just a class two days a week in a homeschooling co-op.

0:34:13.9 Katie Berlin: So that's nice because, again, it has the community of parents coming together, using their strengths, and helping a bunch of people learn.

0:34:23.2 Katie Berlin: I love that, and I know Brittany. I met her at Uncharted, and we ran together there. And so I was following her running journey and then watching her family grow. So that's wonderful. And man, you said, at least you're not superwoman. I mean, if anyone is superwoman in this industry, I think it might be you, Julie Buzby. But speaking of which, you had talked about, your conference is called, it's got the word encouragement in the title, and encouragement is something that I think I don't hear very much.

0:35:05.3 Katie Berlin: We hear the word empowerment a lot. Are empowerment and encouragement the same to you, or are they different things? And if so, how are they different?

0:35:16.1 Julie Buzby: Not for me, because empowerment, to me, often comes through education, and that's your or experience. Basically, they're almost academic. I can be empowered to be better at my job by going to learning, or getting a wet lab, or somehow stepping up a level in a skill or a knowledge foundation.

0:35:42.8 Julie Buzby: Encouragement's all about the heart. My brain's not much a part of it. Sure, somewhat, but it's like my heart, and to be honest, it's really something that I deal with a ton in my personal life. Raising eight humans, when they were babies, I had full control. I dictated how our life was gonna go. Now, I have six teenagers, and if I've learned anything, it's I don't have much control over this situation.

0:36:06.6 Katie Berlin: Or your refrigerator.

0:36:10.3 Julie Buzby: True, true. And so, and then ToeGrips is such a, I'm so blessed by the trajectory that we've been on, and the amazing people we work with, but nothing's perfect. There's things that come up, whether it be that one rare, nasty customer interaction, or finding out that there's some, there's a competitor who's playing dirty. There's just things that I'm oh you just crushed my soul, because, that's not the way it should work.

0:36:40.3 Julie Buzby: And so, I get discouraged, and that's really why I wanted to offer encouragement, and I think, as a profession, I don't know. I guess encouragement comes, a large part of the recipe for encouragement comes from empathy, that we can really see, and that's why I'm

with the Vet Moms, because I can really see that, their challenges, and so much of what is a part of their pattern and their life. So, yeah, I struggle greatly with discouragement on a daily basis, and I'm so thankful for the people that build encouragement into me, and I think, professionally, I think we need a real gigantic, healthy dose of it, and it's not empowerment, even though that's also important.

0:37:24.5 Katie Berlin: I love what you've said, and empowerment thinking about what it would mean to me for somebody to be I want to empower you to do this, it's always to do something. It's like to be more, do more learn more, and that's great, because I think that's a super important part of life, is just, constantly growing and learning, but when you're feeling discouraged, it can be really exhausting to think about, having to be empowered to go do something. Then you're like, I'm just trying to do what I'm doing right now, and encouragement implies that you are just giving the person support when they're sinking a little bit, and, they don't have to be anything other than what they are right now, and I love that, because so many of us just feel we've grown up knowing that we have to be striving for something, and just having somebody be no, you're enough, you can do it, and I can help you, and I understand, it's very powerful.

0:38:21.7 Julie Buzby: Yes, and helping you, like you said, doesn't necessarily mean, I'm going to help you achieve something greater, more, or the next level, I'm just gonna help you by listening, by hugging you, by, validating your feelings, I'm just gonna help you by being near you, whatever that looks like for your own love language, but it's so much more, I don't wanna say simple, it's just so much more, of the heart, it's just a heart matter for me.

0:38:54.9 Katie Berlin: Yeah, love it, and you don't need any special skills to do it, you just need to be there. I think, I love learning things, and sometimes I need to remember myself just to slow down, and have somebody maybe encourage me just to like, chill. And I don't have eight kids, so I think if I had eight kids, I would definitely want to chill, and not have any time to do it, so. It's always looking over into the other person's yard, and trying to see, what they're dealing with, and then encourage them when they're doing that, and not what you would think they should be doing.

0:39:32.8 Katie Berlin: And Julie, you seem like one of the most, just open, generous, every interaction that we've ever had, you've just been, you just kind of light up when you talk to people, I know you're an extrovert, and you just are like, Hi, and you ask questions, you really want to know the answer, and that is a really special gift, so I'm really glad that it's you who had these ideas, and who are really taking on extra work to be that for as many people as possible.

0:40:03.1 Julie Buzby: Well, thank you, I mean, like I said, I'm definitely not doing it perfectly, I am not perfect, but I do think we all, where, I mean, it sounds like a cliché, but where we are, we can all do something to encourage someone, I really believe that.

0:40:19.5 Katie Berlin: I love it. So I'm gonna, I think I'm gonna let us leave it there, because I think that's the best takeaway there could possibly be from today, and I hope that it inspires somebody to go out and just say, Hey, that person looks like they could need a little boost, and I'm gonna be the boost, so.

0:40:36.8 Julie Buzby: I love it. Thank you.

0:40:38.3 Katie Berlin: Julie, yeah, thank you, and thank you for being a light in this profession, for and you're a quiet light, you don't seem to wanna be in the spotlight, but you want to provide

that you generously will provide all of that encouragement for anybody who needs it, and I'm gonna put some links in the show notes for the conference, if you have a website or conference link or something, we'll put that in the website, and then also for ToeGrips, obviously. And we do offer ToeGrips in the AHA store, but it's a link that will take them to your site, and that's really important, it's important to you, and would you just mention why that is before I sign off, because I think that's an important part of it.

0:41:28.8 Julie Buzby: Yeah, so for 10 years, we never sold ToeGrips on Amazon, because I did not, just, we talked about culture a little bit, we talked about like values, like being that, the reputation. So on our own site, we can control the customer journey somewhat, we can certainly control the response that the customer gets if there's a problem, the messaging, and on Amazon, we can't, because they want to be in control of all that, and unfortunately, we have had other companies just take our name, take our tagline, infringe on our patent, take actually like custom commissioned artwork as a part of their listing, like that's my receptionist golden retriever, like that's my picture that I paid to the person [0:42:18.9] ____.

0:42:21.1 Katie Berlin: Oh, my gosh.

0:42:21.2 Julie Buzby: So we finally, last November, went on Amazon, basically just to defend our product, and our IP, and our capture our own goodwill and not let other people take it. So that is why we're there, so people who are searching see us and don't just buy a competitor product that doesn't have the support and all the years of research and background that we do, but it's definitely preferable for people to buy through our site, so we very much appreciate you having the link and sending people on.

0:42:52.9 Julie Buzby: We have a retail store, we also have wholesale for veterinarians, so veterinarians can buy wholesale for themselves, for their technicians, or obviously for their clients, and have the full support, we offer a money back guarantee, and if there's any issues, we're always happy. I'm always happy to talk directly with the practice, or even if it's easier for the practice, even directly with their client, and help get things straightened out, but even if ToeGrips are not the right product for a patient, I can guarantee you that, I can almost guarantee you that the client will walk away feeling valued, and feeling like they had a good experience, and so I'm really proud to be able to offer that ancillary kind of service to practices who carry our products.

0:43:31.1 Katie Berlin: Love that, and that's such a good indicator of who you are as a person. So, Julie, thank you so much for coming on Central Line. We've been talking about doing this for a while, and I'm glad that we finally got a chance to, and sit in different chairs than that first time back in like 2017, or '18, or whatever that was that we podcasted together, so I really appreciate your time, and wisdom, and all of the things that you do for our community.

0:44:01.3 Julie Buzby: Thank you, and thank you for all you do.

0:44:04.5 Katie Berlin: And thanks to everyone for listening and watching. We'll catch you next time on Central Line.