



# ALL ANIMALS

## COMMUNICATION AND WELLBEING



### Why people matter

Anne-Marie Svendsen Aylott  
Cand.Med.Vet., RCVS, NLP Master Practitioner,  
Leadership coach and trainer

PurpleCat Coaching Ltd.  
United Kingdom  
annemarie@purplecatcoaching.com

As veterinarians we are taught throughout our education to master science, diagnostics and therapeutics. We learn that we are capable of many things and we grow our confidence in mastering difficult subjects. Yet, as a profession, we seem to hold the assumption that good communication and leadership is something that should happen automatically or something that we surely already know. It is only when we repeatedly find that we run into challenges with clients, managers, colleagues and direct reports that we may realise that it takes as many years and as much studying to master communication as it does to master veterinary science. Truly outstanding communication is a complex, evidence-based subject that requires an understanding of psychology, neuroscience, behaviour science and cognitive linguistics to master. Communication is the invisible web that holds together every single individual and every single community. Investing time and effort in learning the science of how to constantly grow the quality of your interactions within yourself and towards others will probably be the single most significant contribution towards wellbeing you will ever do. And that is YOUR wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. And paradoxically, as we become better and more conscious communicators, the clients engage with us, the atmosphere in the practice improves and the profits increase.

So where do you start? One of the hardest things to do when we work to become proficient in a different subject, is to put aside our assumption that lectures are about teaching us how to do what we already do, just better. Unfortunately, it is only when we truly step outside our comfort zone and accept that true learning is UNCOMFORTABLE that we are able to change those habits of thinking, feeling, speaking and doing that are currently hindering us in how we feel about ourselves and how we interact with others. And the first place to focus, is on how mindset impacts everything around you, because in order to allow yourself to truly learn and go through the uncomfortable phase, you need to shift yourself into what is known as an incremental mindset.

### References:

- Dweck, CS, Leggett, EL. (1988). A social-cognitive approach to motivation and personality. *Psychological Review*, 95, 256-273.
- Dweck, CS. (1999). *Self-theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality, and Development*. Essays in Social Psychology. Psychology Press.
- Dweck, CS. (2006). *Mindset*. New York: Random House.
- Mueller, CM, Dweck, CS. (1998). Intelligence praise can undermine motivation and performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75, 33-52
- Nussbaum, AD, Dweck, CS. (2008). Defensiveness versus remediation: Self-theories and modes of self-esteem maintenance. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 34, 599-612.