

VET CANDY

LOVE + Career

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THE ERA OF
PAUL DIAZ

BEGINS NOW

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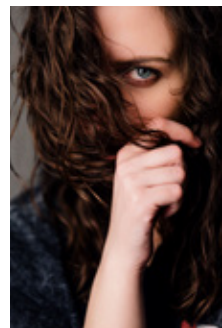
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Credits

- Dr. Jill Lopez
Editor in Chief
- Omar A. Lopez
Creative Director
- Shannon Gregoire
Assistant Editor
- Yagmur Karaman
Design Editor
- Eoin Finnegan
Copy and Research Editor
- A.M. KUSKA
Features Editor
- Shayna Chapman
Food Editor
- Arlene Torres
Fitness Editor
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Nature and Science Editor
- Published by
Vet Candy Media
- Chief Executive Officer
Dr. Jill Lopez



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Welcome to the world of
VET CANDY

Paul Diaz, Guest Editor



There are many challenges facing the veterinary industry today. We hear about them regularly; the veterinary shortage, DEI, burn-out, access to care, mental health issues, compassion fatigue, technician utilization and compensation, the list goes on. Of all the challenges, there's one that doesn't seem to get its fair share of airtime. Most of the prominent veterinarians or influential industry personalities aren't trying to raise awareness for it like they do for other issues. Employers aren't creating working groups to discuss it, hell, most won't even acknowledge it. For the veterinarian impacted by it, it can mean a loss of supplemental income, the inability to accept a career changing opportunity or possibly being forced to move from their hometown to continue practicing medicine. At worst, it could result in a veterinarian having no other option than to stop practicing or risking their mental health and wellbeing by continuing to practice in a toxic work environment while dealing with the depression of their reality.

The challenge I'm referring to is the veterinary non-compete requirement.

As the former Vice President of DVM Recruiting for one of the nation's largest veterinary employers, I was lucky to have led a passionate and dedicated group of veterinary recruiters. With the help of my Director, Josh Blake, we spent our first 6 months implementing the technology they'd need to be successful, developing a streamlined hiring process, hiring additional recruiters to handle the anticipated workload and training everyone to a single and consistent method of recruiting. In the 2 years that followed, we hired 1,120 veterinarians. Having spent about 20 years of my corporate life in California, non-competes weren't even on my radar.

As the Vice President, it wasn't my job to have one on one conversations with candidates, so I never heard the non-compete horror stories. I didn't learn about how bad non-competes were until I started my own business and began having those conversations. One story in particular compelled me to act. It was the subject of an article I published on Linked In on February 24th, 2022. It was titled "Suffer In Silence, How the Non-Compete Damaged a Veterinarian."

In that article I wrote about a new veterinarian, Sara, who was stuck in an extremely toxic work environment and saw no way out. During my first call with Sara, I asked her how she was coping with everything and she told me, "I just go work and do the very best I can for my patients while suffering in silence." That was the exact moment I knew I had to do something. It also made me realize that while I'm proud of my team's achievement, I was disheartened by the fact that I was responsible for so many non-competes. It immediately became my personal obligation to right this wrong and I started by announcing my company would no longer place veterinarians with any employer who required a non-compete. I instantly lost roughly 90% of my employer clients but the immense support I gained from veterinarians, the people I respect and admire the most, was more than worth it!

I'm so thankful to the Vet Candy team to give me the platform to tell you why non-competes need to be history. By supporting my advocacy and providing me this platform to spread awareness they are demonstrating that they truly do care about veterinarians and the veterinary industry.

We love you for reading!

THE ERA OF PAUL DIAZ BEGINS NOW

By Jen Boon

Not so long ago, workers in the United States had minimal workplace rights.

For example, hazardous working conditions were rampant. Discrimination based on skin color, ethnicity, and language wasn't just common – it was widely accepted as “normal.” Not to mention, women were systemically barred from higher-paying jobs.

It was not until much later in the 20th century that we began to see labor laws change.

But for Paul Diaz, there is still room to improve.

In fact, advocating for veterinary professionals is what he does best!

As a United States Marine Corps Veteran with over 21 years of experience leading recruiting teams in multiple industries and a Vice President of DVM Recruiting for one of the nation's largest veterinary employers, Diaz has seen the good, the bad, and the ugly when it comes to hiring practices.

It is what prompted him to start his own company called Hire Power Consulting.

Vet Candy is beyond thankful to Paul Diaz for taking the time to speak with us today. In this interview, he discusses why signing non-competes is problematic, what qualities contributed to his success, plus the best career advice he ever received. Introducing, the champion for veterinarian rights, Paul Diaz!



ASKED TO SIGN A NON-COMPETE? THINK TWICE

All veterinarians must complete studies on the principles of veterinary medical ethics.

However, when it comes to ethical issues surrounding our own employment, the waters suddenly get muddy. Oftentimes, a new job comes with what is called a “non-compete agreement.”

At its core, this is a legal document which, according to the AVMA, can include restricting where a veterinarian can work geographically (should they quit or be fired), prevent them from opening their own practice nearby, and disallow them from taking on clients who they once worked with on behalf of their past employer.

As you can imagine, this has the potential to create all sorts of ethical dilemmas...

After hearing horror stories from veterinarians who had signed non-competes, Paul Diaz decided enough was enough. He immediately made a business decision to stop working with employers who required non-competes.

Thus, Hire Power Consulting became something of a rare “unicorn” in the industry.

But this turned out to be a powerful decision.

Despite losing over 90% of his clients in the short-term, the veterinary community rallied around Diaz in support. Luckily, his belief in servant leadership, ability to build strong, high performing teams, and desire to do the things others won't (even if that means making the hard choice) has led him to build an astonishingly successful business.

But his ultimate mission in life?

“To care for my family and friends and do everything I can to provide them the best life I can,” he says.

And quite clearly, this includes looking out for the welfare of veterinarians, too!



FOCUS ON YOURSELF

Hindsight is 20-20, as they say. In retrospect, Paul Diaz would tell his younger self “Don't ever worry about what other people think.”

However, it took time to learn this lesson. When asked what the best career advice he ever received was, Paul recalled the following story:

“I was applying for an internal promotion knowing I was the most underqualified candidate,” he said. My boss at the time could sense my anxiety. She called me into her office and we spoke about it. She listened intently. When I was done speaking, she asked me one simple question, ‘What can you do about it?’ She was asking me what I could do about the other candidate's experience levels.”

When he replied there was nothing he could do, she said, “Exactly, there's nothing you can do about it so stop worrying.”

It was at that moment Paul realized that by focusing on his competitors, he was preventing himself from doing his best.

So, he stopped worrying and instead brainstormed how to turn his weaknesses into a strengths.

It paid off!

He got the job.

In summary, Paul Diaz encourages everyone to simply be the best versions of themselves.

“What's important is simply being a good human,” he ends.

WHAT A BAN ON NON-COMPETE AGREEMENTS COULD MEAN FOR THE VETERINARY PROFESSION

By Paul Diaz

The veterinary industry is recession proof. It has proven this time and time again. Whenever our country has been impacted by anything that would cause other industries to falter, the veterinary industry has remained strong.

Many say it's because pet parents will sacrifice in other areas to ensure their pets continue to receive the care they need. I can support that position; I am part of that demographic. In a time where people are waiting longer to start a family or choosing not to have children at all, that void is being filled with pets; pets that are essentially viewed and treated as if they were children.

But there's another, often overlooked reason why this industry can survive in conditions others can't and that reason is the veterinarian. The compassionate, driven, and dedicated individual whose sole purpose in life is to care for animals. No matter what is going on in the world, the veterinarian shows up for their patients. It's their compassion that makes this industry so special. Their compassion is the foundation upon which this industry was built. And it's their compassion that makes them so vulnerable to the predatory practices of many employers.



Billions of dollars have flooded this industry over the past decades. Investors recognize that veterinarians will show up in the worst of times to care for an animal and showing up means money is being made. Investors care about nothing more than the return. When the employer becomes beholden to the investor, their priorities become laser focused on driving more and more profit. What about those employers who aren't investor backed? Well, some say their motivations are even clearer, greed. When you operate in a climate where profit comes before people, the end result is the veterinary industry we have today.

So, what does any of this have to do with the non-compete? Everything. By requiring veterinarians to sign a non-compete employers can illicit control over a veterinarian's options thereby enabling them to control a portion of the industry's revenue. With a non-compete the employer can prevent a veterinarian from working for other employers, preventing that veterinarian from generating revenue for someone else. The less revenue my competition makes, the more I can make. The employment relationship is intended to be mutually beneficial. I provide you a service, you pay me for that service. It's a simple concept. There is nothing mutually beneficial about a non-compete. It only benefits the employer. For the veterinarian who signs one, they risk:

- Limiting their earning potential by restricting their ability to work elsewhere
- Preventing themselves from obtaining better opportunities
- Significant impacts to their personal lives if they want to change employers
- Losing control over their career and their ability to make career defining decisions
- Negative effect on their mental health if they have no other option but to stay in a toxic work environment



The employers who require a non-compete know this. They just redirect your attention with large bonuses and the opportunity to be part of their "family". They all promote their great cultures. Their executives will parrot the corporate tag lines with confidence.

When it comes to walking their talk, well that's a risk they aren't willing to take. Instead of competing for and retaining talent on the merits of how they actually treat people, they force it by requiring a non-compete.

On March 9th, 2017 the American Bar Association adopted Rule 5.6 preventing restrictions on an lawyer's right to practice. In 2016 the American Medical Association established Opinion 11.2.3.1, Restrictive Covenants, as part of its Code of Medical Ethics. In it, the AMA states, "Covenants-not-to-compete restrict competition, can disrupt continuity of care, and may limit access to care.

Physicians should not enter into covenants that:

1. Unreasonably restrict the right of a physician to practice medicine for a specified period of time or in a specified geographic area on termination of a contractual relationship; and
2. Do not make reasonable accommodation for patients' choice of physician.

Physicians in training should not be asked to sign covenants not to compete as a condition of entry into any residency or fellowship program."

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) vision statement states, "The American Veterinary Medical Association's vision is to be the trusted leader in protecting, promoting and advancing a strong, unified veterinary profession that meets the needs of society." Their mission statement says, "The mission of the Association is to lead the profession by advocating for our members and advancing the science and practice of veterinary medicine to improve animal and human health." The very first sentence from the AVMA's advocacy page states, "The AVMA represents the interests of veterinarians through strategically targeted advocacy in Congress, with regulatory agencies, and before the courts."

Non-competes are not new to the veterinary industry, yet here we are in 2023 and the AVMA has remained silent on this topic. In September, 2022 Dr. Lori Teller, President of the AVMA responded to a comment I posted on LinkedIn about the AVMA's inaction. She stated, "The non-compete discussions are part of the discussions related to updates regarding the Model Veterinary Practice Act and the Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics." I reached out to Dr. Teller in an attempt to have a one-on-one conversation. She graciously accepted my invitation and during that conversation I learned that it could be another year until the AVMA makes a decision on non-competes.

Dr. Teller encourages veterinary professionals to provide feedback on the Model Veterinary Practice Act and/or the Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics by emailing mvpa@avma.org OR pvme@avma.org. We must utilize these channels to inform those at the highest level of the AVMA, that non-competes have no place in veterinary medicine.

Ignoring this issue seems to be a common method of dealing with it for many of the major veterinary employers. My outreach started privately with executives from many of the large corporate employers. One solid year, hundreds of posts and 100% of them were ignored. Maybe they thought I would just go away. Maybe they didn't think one single person could raise any level of impactful awareness.

Or maybe they thought nobody would care. If so, they could not have been more wrong.

The veterinary non-compete will end eventually. When it does, all these companies and their executives will be on the wrong side of history. They will be remembered for not acting when veterinarians needed them.

So how do we fix this problem faster?

Should we wait for employers to wake up on the ethical side of the bed? No. Should we wait for the AVMA, the industry's leading veterinary advocate, to finally take a position, I don't think so. We fix this problem by educating and empowering all veterinarians to stand up and make it known that you will not sign a non-compete. Organization is powerful.

Once enough veterinarians organize behind this cause, the employers will give in. We need to reach deep into the veterinary schools and teach every student about non-competes and why they should not sign them. We need those students to organize and publicly support the end of non-competes. Make it known that their entire class has agreed to not engage with any employer requiring a non-compete. Once the first school does it, others will join.

When employers realize they cannot hire a single new grad, they will buckle. Experienced veterinarians who work for a non-compete requiring employer need to organize internally and raise this concern as a united front. Influence the change from within.

To end the non-compete veterinarians need to show solidarity for each other. Think about that one veterinarian who had the same childhood dreams as you. Who worked just as hard through undergrad and vet school. Who was just as excited as you were to land their first job but unfortunately, that veterinarian landed in a toxic work environment. That veterinarian didn't know better and signed a non-compete. That veterinarian cannot relocate for whatever reason and doesn't have the luxury of just not working. Think about that one veterinarian who shows up to work everyday, does the best they can for their patients and does it all while suffering in silence.

I cannot win this fight alone.

Tell the world you will not sign a non-compete. Organize your colleagues and as a united front, tell your employer to end their non-competes.

That's how we fix this problem.

The Federal Trade Commission wants your help to end non-competes

forever

The Federal Trade Commission proposed a new rule that would ban employers from imposing noncompetes on their workers, a widespread and often exploitative practice that suppresses wages, hampers innovation, and blocks entrepreneurs from starting new businesses. By stopping this practice, the agency estimates that the new proposed rule could increase wages by nearly \$300 billion per year and expand career opportunities for about 30 million Americans.

The FTC is seeking public comment on the proposed rule, which is based on a preliminary finding that noncompetes constitute an unfair method of competition and therefore violate Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act.

“The freedom to change jobs is core to economic liberty and to a competitive, thriving economy,” said Chair Lina M. Khan. “Noncompetes block workers from freely switching jobs, depriving them of higher wages and better working conditions, and depriving businesses of a talent pool that they need to build and expand. By ending this practice, the FTC’s proposed rule would promote greater dynamism, innovation, and healthy competition.”

Companies use noncompetes for workers across industries and job levels, from hairstylists and warehouse workers to doctors and business executives. In many cases, employers use their outsized bargaining power to coerce workers into signing these contracts. Noncompetes harm competition in U.S. labor markets by blocking workers from pursuing better opportunities and by preventing employers from hiring the best available talent.

“Research shows that employers’ use of noncompetes to restrict workers’ mobility significantly suppresses workers’ wages—even for those not subject to noncompetes, or subject to noncompetes that are unenforceable under state law,” said Elizabeth Wilkins, Director of the Office of Policy Planning. “The proposed rule would ensure that employers can’t exploit their outsized bargaining power to limit workers’ opportunities and stifle competition.”



The evidence shows that noncompete clauses also hinder innovation and business dynamism in multiple ways—from preventing would-be entrepreneurs from forming competing businesses, to inhibiting workers from bringing innovative ideas to new companies. This ultimately harms consumers; in markets with fewer new entrants and greater concentration, consumers can face higher prices—as seen in the health care sector.



To address these problems, the FTC's proposed rule would generally prohibit employers from using noncompete clauses. Specifically, the FTC's new rule would make it illegal for an employer to:

- Enter into or attempt to enter into a noncompete with a worker;
- Maintain a noncompete with a worker; or
- Represent to a worker, under certain circumstances, that the worker is subject to a noncompete.

The proposed rule would apply to independent contractors and anyone who works for an employer, whether paid or unpaid. It would also require employers to rescind existing noncompetes and actively inform workers that they are no longer in effect.

The proposed rule would generally not apply to other types of employment restrictions, like non-disclosure agreements. However, other types of employment restrictions could be subject to the rule if they are so broad in scope that they function as noncompetes.

This NPRM aligns with the FTC's recent statement to reinvigorate Section 5 of the FTC Act, which bans unfair methods of competition. The FTC recently used its Section 5 authority to ban companies from imposing onerous noncompetes on their workers. In one complaint, the FTC took action against a Michigan-based security guard company and its key executives for using coercive noncompetes on low-wage employees.

The Commission also ordered two of the largest U.S. glass container manufacturers to stop imposing noncompetes on their workers because they obstruct competition and impede new companies from hiring the talent needed to enter the market. This NPRM and recent enforcement actions make progress on the agency's broader initiative to use all of its tools and authorities to promote fair competition in labor markets.

The Commission voted 3-1 to publish the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, which is the first step in the FTC's rulemaking process. They now are inviting the public to submit comments on the proposed rule. The FTC will review the comments and may make changes, in a final rule, based on the comments and on the FTC's further analysis of this issue. The comment period is open through Mar 10, 2023.



Scan to comment



Real stories about vets who signed non-competes

Note: The names have been changed to protect the veterinarians who have shared their story below to protect their privacy.

Dr. K's Story:

The hospital I worked for was bought by a corporate practice in October 2021. We were given a very short window in which to sign our contracts, and like an idiot, I signed their contract that included a 2 year, 15 mile noncompete. I wasn't planning on leaving, as this truly had been my "dream job." Fast forward 6 months, and the new corporate model was not what I had signed up for. Five of the vets, including myself, went to management with our concerns numerous times. We were ignored. As a result, they lost all 5 of us.

I took a position with another clinic which was about 16 miles from home and just outside of my former employer's non-compete radius. This time I refused to sign their contract unless the non-compete was removed. They agreed!

Here is the problem. I was recently diagnosed with night blindness. I cannot see well enough to drive at night, so the 16-mile trek to my new clinic is problematic. I have been told that I can cut my hours and leave earlier to try to make it home before dark, but I cannot afford the loss of income. I am a single mother, so a pay cut is not an option for me.

I have been a vet for 21 years. Because I signed a non-compete, I cannot practice within a reasonable distance to my home. I am having to consider leaving the profession entirely. I am left with the choice of a remote position or getting out of veterinary medicine for at least 2 years. The stress this is causing is about to send me over the edge.

Dr. J's Story:

After graduating from veterinary school in 2019, I accepted an offer to work at a small animal practice in South Dakota. I was so excited, and most of all hopeful, for my first job out of school that I signed the contract without lawyer review, bought a home, and made the move from Colorado. In hindsight, I should have known better to negotiate

certain aspects of the contract, observe stipulations for the non-compete, and realize how leaving the position may impact both my personal and professional life. The excitement surrounding my first veterinary position most definitely clouded my judgement.

The contract verbiage and terms were ridiculous, and the owner had a notorious pattern for hiring new graduates almost exclusively or maybe new graduates were the only veterinarians naïve enough to sign these contracts.

My contract contained a non-compete of 10 miles for 2 years. Again, I was so excited for my first veterinary position – it was in my wife's hometown, it was closer to my family in North Dakota, and we also had many friends and college roommates living in Rapid City. This is where we planned to start our lives and plant our roots.

Over a period of 12 months during COVID, all 4 Associate DVMs at this 5 DVM practice voluntarily left the hospital. Over a dozen support staff members also left the hospital during the same time period. I informed the owner that I would not be renewing my contract in June 2021, and the owner then terminated my position 3 weeks prior to the end of my contract. This left me in a tough situation since the non-compete covered the entire city limits.

My non-compete affected me both professionally and personally in numerous ways. First, I was engaged at the time that my non-compete took effect and was unable to subsequently live full-time with my wife. She has a wonderful job, loves our home, and wishes to stay near her family. So, for the full two years we had to maintain a long-distance relationship.

Second, I have had to make sacrifices in my professional career. I am still a young veterinarian and

wish to experience all facets of veterinary medicine. As a relief veterinarian, opportunities for mentorship, clinical skill development, surgical training, and continuity of patient care for complex cases are all negatively impacted. Certain areas of my professional career have certainly taken a setback due to the nature of relief work.

Lastly, I have missed out on so many family and life events. The obvious is missed opportunities to live with my wife and plan for our future family. But I also had to experience the illnesses and deaths of my own pets while working on the other side of the country. Being absent from these moments and unable to provide veterinary care to my own animals has been one of the most challenging consequences of my non-compete clause.

Non-competes are designed to protect employers and have the greatest impact on young, naïve employees. And while they are damaging to veterinarians in any setting, they are particularly harmful to veterinarians in more rural settings – where a seemingly small radius can exclude work from entire cities and even entire counties – forcing some veterinarians to make drastic decisions to find work.

Dr. G's Story:

Many veterinarians are currently being negatively impacted by non-compete clauses in their contracts. I am one of them. After 5 years at my previous job as a small animal practitioner in a small community, I was forced out of the area and away from many patients and their pet parents. I still live 5 minutes away from that clinic and people still recognize me and ask when I will be back in the area.

My commute is currently one-hour long with no traffic. I love the area and property where I live so moving is not an option. The earliest I can come back to this area to work is June 2023. This clinic also extended non-competes to their staff members: managers, receptionists, and technicians.

Veterinarians need to protect their professional freedom and the bond they create with patients and pet parents over the years. Non-competes will disappear when employers realize it is the number one reason offers are being declined. The freedom to work where you want and being able to switch jobs when your mind and body tell you to do so are more important than any other aspect of an employment offer. To all veterinarians out there: read your contract carefully before accepting and adamantly refuse to sign a non-compete.

Companies that do not require non-competes

- Galaxy Vets
- PetFolk
- Better Vet Mobile Vet Care
- Orting Animal Hospital (Orting, WA)
- Frisco Emergency Pet Care (Frisco, TX)
- Healing Hands Small Animal Emergency Hospital (Twin Falls, ID)
- Olympic Veterinary Cardiology (Snohomish, WA)
- Road Runner Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Hospital (Albuquerque, NM)
- Eclipse Specialty & Emergency Pet Care (Whippany, NJ)
- Spay Neuter Illinois Pets (SNIP) Society (Joliet, IL)
- Bay Beach Veterinary Hospital (Virginia Beach, VA)
- Partner Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Hospital (Richmond, VA)
- Modern Animal
- Veterinary Emergency Group
- Rarebreed Veterinary Partners

What employers are saying about non-competes:

“Non-compete clauses hurt both veterinary professionals and their patients by creating an access to care barrier. They deprive veterinarians of control, trigger burnout, and cause a talent drain that hurts pets and their humans, results in longer wait times, and hinders development of our industry. Non-competes limit an individual’s options to self-direct their career choices and make a change if desired. If we fail as employers, our people shouldn’t be penalized for that. Instead of trapping employees with unethical limitations, we should create an environment where they want to be.”

Dr. Ivan Zak
CEO, Galaxy Vets

“The veterinary industry should be ashamed of itself for relying on non-competes to restrict job choice and to perpetuate discontent across the profession. Doctors deserve to practice medicine in whatever environment supports them best. Non-competes are a tool leveraged by those who refuse to adapt and lack the capacity to meet the needs of their customers, both internal and external. There is no more important stakeholder for all of us within the veterinary industry than our practitioner, and they simply deserve better.”

Steven Eidelman
Founder & CEO, Modern Animal

“To those employers who have veterinary non-competes, you are on the wrong side of history. Noncompete agreements have absolutely nothing to do with preventing competition and everything to do with restricting job choice. Pay better, treat better, provide growth opportunities and get rid of your non-competes.”

David Glattstein
President and Co-Founder, Veterinary
Emergency Group

STOP

Veterinary Non-Competes Take the Pledge



Experts say that more than 30 Million Americans are affected by non-compete agreements. Several states have severely restricted or outright banned non-competes, but companies continue to force non-competes upon their workforce, sometimes illegally. Importantly, non-competes are applied against veterinarians, to the detriment of customers and their animals. The following pledge seeks to affirm your support for combating the epidemic of non-competes in the U.S. veterinary industry.

Take the Pledge

I demand a profession where non-compete agreements no longer apply to veterinarians and their staff.

I believe in the customer's right to choose their veterinarian for themselves and their animal(s).

I believe in an employee's freedom to leave or change employment without being unfairly restricted in their subsequent career choice by a non-compete agreement.

I believe in an employee's freedom to leave toxic workplaces without being blocked or hampered by a non-compete agreement.

I believe in a veterinarian's right to earn a living without being unfairly limited by a non-compete agreement.

I will research applicable state law and/or seek competent legal advice before signing an employment contract.

I will refuse to sign illegal or overly restrictive non-competes.

I support and applaud efforts to eradicate non-compete agreements in the veterinary industry. My support for will be steadfast. I will use my voice when others cannot and I will listen when it is my turn to learn. I am part of a community that is resolute in its efforts to create a brighter, more inclusive world for all people.

Together, we will make it better!

Why non-competes need to be banned

- by Laura M. Flegel,
National Employment Lawyers Association (NELA)
Legislative & Public Policy Director

Employers use noncompete clauses as an insidious tool to hinder innovation and stifle competition. Originally intended to regulate corporate structures, their application today in every industry from tech and healthcare to food service and internships is tantamount to employee straitjackets, many going so far as to ban workers from going into business for themselves. How many workers have the luxury of picking up and moving to another city to find work? Or entering a different field altogether? Most don't, which means they're forced to stay where they are to maintain steady employment.

There is currently no federal standard on noncompete clauses, which is devastating considering the breadth and range of workers they impact. Finding impactful and successful solutions to obstructive noncompete clauses can be challenging. NELA stands firm in its belief that workers deserve protections that promote equity and innovation at all levels of the workforce. A ban on noncompete clauses would put power back into the hands of workers to make decisions about where they work and what's best for their families.

FIND YOUR
DREAM JOB
WITH DR. COURTNEY



1 RACE approved
CE credits



*vet
candy*
CE

WATCH NOW

LITTLE THINGS THAT SAY “I LOVE YOU” TO YOUR OTHER HALF

AM Kuska

If you've been in a long term relationship to someone you love, it can be easy to let little tokens of appreciation just disappear. Although how often you say you love someone depends very much on your individual preferences, you can still let them know you love them in lots of little ways.



* COMPLIMENTS

Complimenting your spouse can boost their confidence and let them know you still think they're pretty great. If you like how he looks, he put on your favorite cologne, or she cooked your favorite meal—let them know how much you love it.

When you compliment your spouse, make sure those compliments are from the heart. A genuine comment of appreciation can help boost their confidence and make them feel loved, false flattery definitely won't.

* LEAVE THEM NOTES

A quick note slipped in their lunch bag or placed on the seat of their car can remind them you love them throughout the day. Little notes are a wonderful way to keep showing that you care, even if you aren't physically there at that moment.

You can also try leaving them small gifts in their coat pocket, or leaving jerky or other treats for them so they have something on hand if they frequently skip or forget their lunches.



* MAKE THEM COFFEE

If your spouse needs a little help to get up in the morning, a cup of coffee made just the way they like it shares a powerful message of love. If your spouse isn't wild about coffee, it can also be their favorite tea or even breakfast. You know what they love the most.

Likewise, bringing a favorite coffee from a coffee stand if they beat you out the door for work can be a wonderful mid-morning pick-me-up for them.

* CUDDLE UP

Snuggling is one of the best ways you can show that you care. Whether you're sharing a blanket while watching Netflix, spooning in bed, or just giving them a hug, you can make them feel more loved every day through the power of touch.

If you're not big on cuddles but your spouse craves touch, giving them a surprise back massage could give them the touch they crave without smothering you.

* LET THEM HAVE SOME BLANKET

If you're a notorious blanket hog (you know who you are), one of the greatest acts of love you can possibly show your significant other is to give them more blanket. At least, at the beginning of the night. As an added bonus, if they try and tell you they woke up shivering with a tiny corner of the blanket left to them, you can point out they had practically all the blanket just a few hours before.

It's always great to let your spouse know that you still care about them, that you still think they look good, and that they still make you happy. Little tokens of appreciation can help keep your bond strong long after the day you first met.



Hookup done right

By Shauna Simmons

✗ Tips for a Safe and Enjoyable Experience

Hookups might be the solution if you have decided to take a break from committed relationships but still want to indulge in some benefits. A hookup is basically a conscious decision to engage in intimacy or sex without the tether of commitment. With hookup culture growing and changing with the times, it's good to ensure you are safe and cautious.

✗ Be Clear About Your Expectations

The healthiest thing you can do for yourself is to be clear about what you are looking for ahead of time. This happens by deciding what you want for yourself out of a situation. Once you are clear about what you want, you must express this verbally to the other person. Communication is your best friend in any situation, especially regarding hookups.

✗ Use Protection

You need to make sure you are using protection for hookups that include sexual interactions. Using male or female condoms is a precaution that protects your physical health from the unknown. It also helps to protect your future from unintentional responsibilities like children. For women, this can also be a reason for using birth control.

✗ Make Sure Everything is Consensual

Consent is the sexiest part of a hookup because it sets the tone for healthy intimacy. While you may not be looking for a long-term partner or relationship, showing your partner respect is still necessary. Communicating consent between one another is a must before any healthy hookup can take place.

✗ Express Your Likes and Dislikes

If you are not comfortable in any way with expressing something you do not like, then you shouldn't be hooking up in the first place. Just like it's your job to receive consent before moving forward, you need to be able to provide it. You owe yourself and your partner honesty regarding the situation. This means being able to express what you do or don't want to happen.

✗ Let a Friend Know Where You Are

This is a huge rule for random or spontaneous hookups. If you are going to leave with a stranger, put a little extra faith in the people you know you can already trust. Share your location with a trusted friend so that they know where to find you if anything happens.

If you plan to indulge in hookup culture, ensure you take all the right precautions to guarantee a safe and enjoyable experience.

A quick morning reflection COULD MAKE YOU A BETTER LEADER -- EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS

Starting your day by thinking about what kind of leader you want to be can make you more effective at work, a new study finds.

"It's as simple as taking a few moments in the morning while you're drinking your coffee to reflect on who you want to be as a leader," said Remy Jennings, a doctoral student in the University of Florida's Warrington College of Business, who authored the study in the journal *Personnel Psychology* with UF management professor Klodiana Lanaj.

When study participants took that step, they were more likely to report helping co-workers and providing strategic vision than on days they didn't do the morning reflection. They also felt more leaderlike on those days, perceiving more power and influence in the office.

The effects also extended to aspiring leaders.

"Leadership is really challenging, so a lot of people are hesitant to tackle leadership roles or assignments," Lanaj said. "Reflecting a few minutes in the morning really makes a difference."

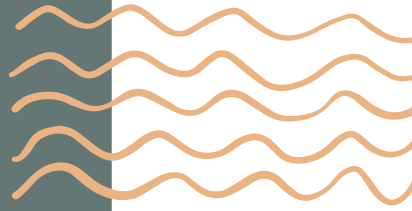
And unlike being given extra responsibility or leading a team project, a morning reflection is under the employee's control.

"They're not dependent on their organization to provide formal opportunities. They don't have to wait until they have that title that says they're a leader to take on leadership in their work," Jennings said.

Want to try a morning leadership boost? Here are some prompts recommended by the researchers.

- What are some of your proudest leadership moments?
- What qualities do you have that make you a good leader, or will in the future?
- Think about who you aspire to be as a leader, then imagine everything has gone as well as it possibly could in this leader role. What does that look like?
- What effect do you want to have on your employees? Do you want to motivate them? Inspire them? Identify and develop their talents? What skills or traits do you have that can help with those goals?

Whether you're the boss or on your way up the ladder, "this is a tool to be more effective at work." Lanaj said. "Just a few minutes can entirely change your focus for the rest of your day."



Love is in the air

by Dr. Jill Lopez

According to Lorretta Young, "Love isn't something you find. Love is something that finds you." This saying is especially true when we are talking about veterinary couple, Dr. Amanda Steffen and husband, Dr. Patrick Reilly. Dr. Amanda shares more in her own words



How they met:

Patrick and I met about a week before starting vet school together at the University of Tennessee. We had a class chat and Patrick asked our class if anyone wanted to meet to play a game of soccer. Although nine others replied that they were interested in playing, he and I were the only two that showed up. We played a casual game and talked. It turned out that we both were former college soccer players and we were very passionate about the sport, so it was very easy to become friends.

What happened next:

During the beginning of vet school, I was struggling. Patrick was not, so he became my tutor. A few months into our friendship, he confided in me that he was interested in being more than friends. But I wasn't looking for a relationship at the time. I did not think that I would be able to balance a relationship with the demands of vet school. Patrick gave me the time I needed and slowly a romantic relationship formed.

When I knew he was the ONE:

The summer before second year, I went home to South Carolina and he stayed in Knoxville. My face lit up every time I saw his name pop up on my phone. We talked every single day for hours. I knew that if my love for him could grow hundreds of miles apart, we were meant to be.

Patrick keeps me grounded and I keep him spontaneous. It is a beautiful dynamic and he is the only one for me.

My favorite getaway with Patrick:

My favorite vacation we have taken together to date would have to be Ireland. Almost two years ago, we rented a car in Dublin and spent three weeks traveling around the entire outside perimeter of Ireland and Northern Ireland, staying at Airbnb's along the way.

We hiked the Cliffs of Moher and Killarney National Park, biked around the Aran Islands, saw the Giants Causeway, met lots of cows and sheep, climbed up numerous castles, sang way too much Ed Sheeran and just enjoyed each other's company.

It is noteworthy that this trip took place about 7 months after we had our daughter, Ellie. She stayed with my mom while we traveled. This trip was amazing! We spent time together as a couple and not just parents. My advice to other parents is that you should make sure you and your spouse are happy in the relationship- always make time for special time with your spouse.



How to be more inclusive at work

by Shauna Simmons

In today's society, more and more people are speaking out about the importance of inclusion. We want to live in a world where everyone feels welcome and accepted, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion. This is why it is so important for businesses to be inclusive in their workplaces. If you're not sure how to make your office a more welcoming place for all, don't worry! We've got you covered. In this blog post, we will discuss some tips for making your workplace more inclusive.

One way to make your workplace more inclusive is to have open and honest conversations about diversity and inclusion. It's important to create a safe space where employees can feel comfortable discussing these topics. You can also provide training on diversity and inclusion for your employees. This will help them to better understand the importance of these issues and how they can play a role in creating a more inclusive environment.

Another way to make your workplace more inclusive is to create policies and procedures that are welcoming to all. This could include things like having gender-neutral bathrooms or offering flexible work hours. By making these changes, you will send the message that everyone is welcome in your workplace.



Finally, one of the most important things you can do to make your workplace more inclusive is to simply be yourself. Be open and honest about who you are, and don't be afraid to stand up for what you believe in. When employees see that they can be themselves at work, it creates a more inclusive environment for everyone.

Remember, it's important to create a safe and welcoming environment for all employees. By doing so, you will not only foster a more inclusive workplace, but you will also create a more productive and successful business.

Dating Tips for Busy People

by Giselle Richardson

Dating itself is already a tough act to handle. Throw a busy schedule into the mix, and you've got yourself the perfect roadblock to romance. Whether you are using being 'too busy' as an excuse or you are being held hostage by a busy schedule. Here are some tips to get yourself on the road to romance in no time.



How Busy is "Too Busy"?

The first step to dating is evaluating how you feel about opening yourself up. If you are truly ready to date, then good for you. For some people, however, being busy is being used as an excuse to avoid dating altogether. This could be in anticipation of unpleasanties like rejection, heartbreak, or a past failed relationship. If there is any reason you may be avoiding dating, then that needs to be addressed first. The best place to start is by being honest with yourself.

Make Yourself Available

The thing about dating is it won't happen unless people know you are available. We often translate this as us being single and ready to mingle at a bar every evening. The truth about dating is that you can meet the right person anywhere and through anyone.

Tell A Friend

Sometimes using your connections can really come in handy. Tell a close friend that you are looking for your next great romance. This might prompt them to keep an eye out for you as well. They might even pop up with a couple recommendations if you give them a glance into your plans to start dating. A blind date might just be what you are looking for.

Online & Dating Apps

Dating apps have saved busy professionals for decades by providing a convenient way to meet other single people. You may consider opening a few dating profiles if you want to take your dating life seriously. You can even meet singles now on social media sites like Facebook Dating.

Unless you make the time to get creative about dating, how can you expect to meet someone with a busy lifestyle? It's time to make sure the right people know you are available. This way, you'll meet the perfect person in no time and leave the complicated dating scene behind once and for all.

THE MOMENT YOU KNOW WHEN IT IS TIME TO LEAVE A JOB



by Dr. Jill Lopez

Looking for a new job is a frightening experience. If you're not the adventurous type who is always moving from job to job, you probably don't leave your job unless forced to by lay offs or even being fired. Sometimes, staying in your old job is actually a really bad idea, and doing you more harm than good. If you're not sure whether you should leave your job or not, here are some clear signs that job is not for you.

YOU'RE UNHAPPY

You spend 40 of your waking hours, or sometimes even more, at your work. If you're miserable there, that means that a vast amount of your life is dreadful. If you really need money, any job is better than no job, but definitely don't stick around forever. There's no reason to be in a job you hate.

Most of the time if you're unhappy, there's good reason for it. You might not be challenged enough, bored in what you do, or in a toxic work environment. These are all good and valid reasons to not want to work for a certain company anymore, and definitely worth looking around for a better job.

YOUR WORK FEELS MEANINGLESS

Most of us have one or two parts of our job that we know aren't very important. The meetings which could have just as easily been sent out as an email, or the jobs so removed from clients, you're pretty sure no one would notice if it never happened.

Meaningfulness is one of the most important parts of a job, more important even than salary. If your whole job feels meaningless, it can rob you of your sense of purpose, or even part of your identity. If you feel like your job has no purpose, it's time to move on to greener pastures.

ARE YOU GETTING FAIRLY COMPENSATED?

Money isn't everything, but if you love being a veterinary technician, would you rather make \$10 per hour or \$40 per hour to enjoy the same career? If you're not getting the compensation you are due, you may be missing out on travel and other opportunities that require better finances, all because of your job.

IS YOUR COMMUTE A REASONABLE LENGTH?

Even if you love your job, a two hour commute in traffic can suck all the joy out of going there. While a commute isn't necessarily a deal breaker—you can always move closer if you're not attached to where you live—it is something to consider.

There are lots of reasons to leave a job and find something better. You might want to try and move up the career ladder, and moving around is the best way to get a better job. If you're just hanging around because you're worried about what will happen to you financially, chances are you could be in a position that makes you a lot happier, just by applying for a new job.

Don't let your happiness slip away because you're afraid. If you're miserable in your current work, it's time to find a new job.



Are non-competes legal?

We asked an expert and here's why he had to say

On this episode of Vet Candy IRL, host Shannon Gregoire speaks with employment attorney, Omar A. Lopez, Esq, about contracts, negotiation, and employee rights. If you are looking for a new job, make sure to listen to this episode first before you sign your paperwork! Omar is a board member of the New Jersey division of the National Employment Lawyer Association and has been practicing employment law for more than 10 years.

The two talk about the importance of hiring an attorney before signing contracts and how to negotiate for better pay.



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How to get the love you want out of your relationship

AM Kuska

If you're in any sort of long term relationship, chances are it will have its ups and downs. Living with another person often means times when you disagree with each other, get into fights, or hurt each others' feelings. While this is a normal part of life, it doesn't do a lot to make you feel loved.

If you're hoping to get more out of your relationship, here are a few tips to feel more loved, and also show your love better, to your partner.



Balance your criticism with affirmations

There are times when you have to ask your partner not to do something, or to be negative towards them in other ways. We often greatly skew how often we critique with how often we build them up. It actually takes about 20 positive statements to balance out a single negative thing.

The best way to achieve this balance is to limit negative comments (even simply saying “Hmph!” to something they said) and add more affirmations in. The better you are at this, the better your relationship will be—and the more likely they’ll be to respond in kind.

Touch your partner more

Touching is one of the most important ways people communicate, but it’s often more curbed than it should be. Give your spouse a massage, kiss them goodbye, or even simply touch their hand while you’re watching TV. The more you touch, the more connected you and your spouse will feel.

If you and your spouse are both busy, penciling in time for sex can also help your relationship—even if you’re literally making an appointment and putting it in your calendar. Between kids and careers, time for sex can often fall to the wayside. Planning for it may not feel sexy, but it can really benefit the relationship.

Make yourself happier

Something we don’t often think about when trying to achieve a better relationship is our happiness outside of love itself. In order to bring your best to the relationship, you need to be happy in general.

If you aren’t happy for other reasons besides your spouse, you may end up taking this out on them. Stress from work, dealing with unruly children, and other problems can all cause you to redirect your frustrations on to your spouse instead.

An easy fix is self-care. Treat yourself well, and your relationship will improve.



Listen

A surprising number of problems can be resolved by simply listening. Listening isn’t simply being quiet until it is your turn to respond, but actually paying attention to what that person is saying. Even if you disagree, taking the time to listen can make a big difference on how they feel. Sometimes, this is all your spouse needs in order to feel loved.

Chances are, you’re not going to see eye to eye with your spouse about everything in your life. When these times happen, falling back both on the investments you’ve made into the relationship, and on skills like listening, can really make a difference.



SICK OF PRACTICE LIFE?

CHECK OUT THESE NON-TRADITIONAL CAREER CHOICES

Dr. Jill Lopez

Veterinary professionals are starting to look outside practice for careers that are a better fit. One reason is that practicing has become very stressful, from dealing with unhappy clients to dealing with the overwhelming need for veterinary care across the nation.

Some vets also feel like they want to try something new because they have hit the proverbial ceiling at their practice. There is no where to go but lateral!

And third, many of us want to focus on work life balance, we want more time to spend with our family and friends and less time in the clinic. Fortunately, just because you have always worked in a veterinary practice does not mean that that is your only career option. Being in the veterinary field, you have many amazing alternative career choices to consider. Here are a few of my favorite alternative careers in vet med:

Pharmacovigilance:

Every veterinary pharmaceutical company will have a pharmacovigilance team. The job of the pharmacovigilance veterinarian or veterinary technician is to report adverse effects and lack of efficacy. The reports are then submitted to the appropriate regulatory agency and the company also monitors them to help make products safer. This type of job is performed in an office (pre-covid) or from home. This career is amazing for people who are looking for better quality of life. This type of job is typically 9-5pm, no weekends, and no holidays. Most pharmaceutical companies offer great benefits, competitive salaries, and the ability to move into other roles.

Professional services:

Most pharmaceutical companies will have at least one, if not dozens of veterinary professionals that deal with sales support. The job of this veterinary professional is to provide technical support which means they attend the booths at veterinary conferences, and they also speak about products at events, like dinners or lunch and learns. In this career, you are on the road quite a bit, so it can be challenging for those with families. If you are looking for a job where you get to travel, this may be the ideal one for you. A typical professional services vet travels at least 50% of the time or more.

That means lots of flights, meals out, and hotels. If you are someone who doesn't like to travel, this may not be the best career move for you.

Other pharma jobs:

Animal Health companies are full of jobs that necessitate a background in veterinary medicine, from research, clinical studies, to marketing. There are companies that also have global divisions.

Military vets:

Being a veterinary professional in the military is a great career to consider. As a veterinarian, you can serve in the Army Veterinary Corps or the Air Force as a Public Health Officer. As an Army Veterinarian Officer, you'll specialize in animal medicine, veterinary public health, and research and development. You'll gain valuable experience leading Veterinary Corps units to treat Army animals, including K-9 units, ceremonial horses, and helping care for Soldiers' family pets. You'll also serve an important role in food safety for your fellow Soldiers and join humanitarian missions to help local communities with animal care. The biggest benefit of being in the military would be the ability for advancement and veteran benefits.

Should You Date a Client or a Co-worker?

By Shauna Simmons

When choosing your significant other, the last place you might look is in the office. While we spend so much time separating work from our personal lives, what happens when sparks fly with a co-worker or client? You can either choose to ignore these feelings and keep the relationship professional. Or you can take the plunge and challenge yourself to build a healthy relationship with a partner you found in a professional environment.

Think Long and Hard

The last thing you want to do is dive face-first into a relationship with someone you need to engage with professionally. The best thing you can do for yourself if you start to develop feelings for someone you need to work with is to take your time. Evaluate the situation, and don't rush into something that might jeopardize the quality of your working environment.

Secure the Bag

Many companies have policies in place regarding romantic relationships among co-workers and clients. The policies are set in place to protect both you and the place you work for. Don't lose your paycheck because you broke company policy. Before you even consider taking a relationship from professional to intimate, check in with HR about company policy.

Focus Extra Time on Work-Life Balance

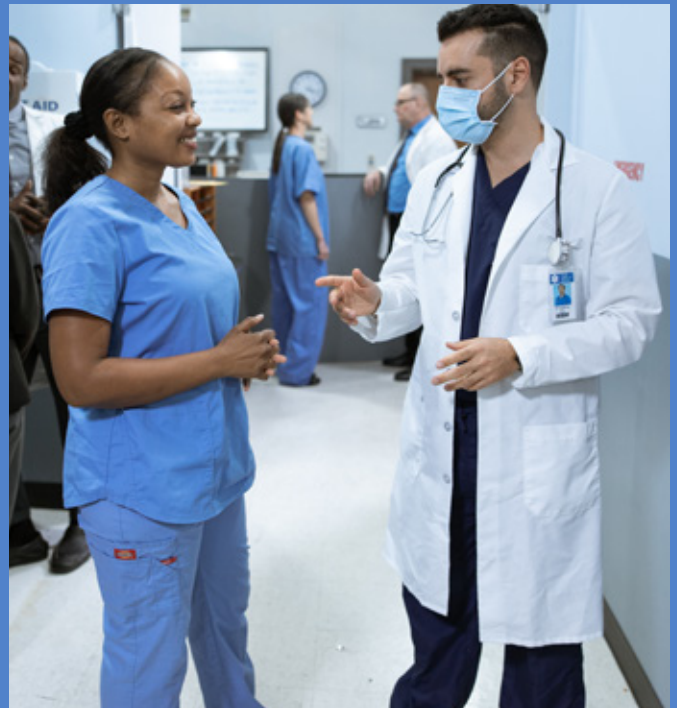
Being romantic with someone you work with can blur the lines between your personal and work life. If you do end up dating someone from work, you need to spend extra time balancing your work and personal life. Make sure you know when it's time to leave the office at the office and enjoy your regular life. Take time to discuss and share your day with one another, but be intentional about changing the conversation away from work.



Be Aware of Any Power Dynamics

Dating a co-worker or a client is one thing, but choosing to date your boss or a subordinate is another ballpark. In this situation, you should avoid engaging in any intimate relationship. Power dynamics take the level of control and respect between two people in an intimate relationship to places they should never go in the first place. It is not smart to date someone you know has control over any aspect of your career or whose career you have control over.

Things can get complicated quickly when it comes to dating in a professional atmosphere. It's best to be honest with yourself about the situation. Take your time to think before indulging in an intimate relationship with someone you work with.



4 things to consider *before you accept* the new job

Dr. Jill Lopez

When you leave your old job for a new one, you usually do so with high hopes for the future. Imagine the sinking feeling you get when you arrive at your new job and realize that the company's values are completely different from your own.

Working for a job that makes you miserable is awful, and being on the hunt for a new job right away is also stressful. If you don't want to be caught in this difficult position, here are a few things you should ask about.

★ Do the company values match yours?

Sometimes the values of a company are obvious. If you're working for a politician's office, you probably know their values based on what political affiliation they have. If it is a fossil fuel company, chances are they're not the type to care about the environment.

Not all values are that obvious though. Do your due diligence on a company before you agree to hire on, and research what their company values are. You don't want to be caught by surprise when it turns out you're not quite the match up you dreamed of.

Luckily, finding out company values should be easy enough. You should be able to get a clear idea from their mission statement, and general website information.



★ What is an 'awesome' work culture?

Many companies brag about their work culture to try and make their company look more attractive, but what is a great work culture to you? If you are shy and reserved, being forced to spend time after work at social gatherings or in an open office plan with everyone talking could be a nightmare.

On the other hand, if you're outgoing and love to communicate with others, finding out that silence is golden in your new job may be frustrating. Ask for details about what their work culture is like before joining.

★ Speak with current workers there

You may have researched the company to find out if their values match yours, and it sounds like they're doing exciting work, but who you work with every single day can make or break your decision. If they're excited about their job, seem to be motivated and talented, and have been there a long time—these are great signals.

On the other hand, if there is high turn over and a lot of griping, chances are there's something really off about the company that makes working there unpleasant.

★ Meet the boss

Most people leave their jobs because the management made them miserable. No one wants to work for a petty or difficult boss, and management that hates you coming in the door will make it very hard for you to make a good impression.

Between talking to your boss and your potential future coworkers, you can get a clear image of what working for the company is like before you sign on, a pretty important goal. If everything lines up, you can sign on to the company confidently knowing that this company is the match for you.

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Ten date ideas under \$20

AM Kuska

If you are strapped for cash, finding ways to spend time with your significant other can become pretty repetitive. If you're tired of your dates involving nothing more than choosing a new Netflix show, here are 20 creative dates all under \$20.



Voluntary Black Out

No one actually enjoys power outages—or do we? After the shock of not being able to turn on our screens or even the bathroom light is over, we often end up having more fun than we would have. Turn off the lights, bring out the candles or flashlights, and see how much fun you can have with a deck of cards and old school games.

Draw a comic book

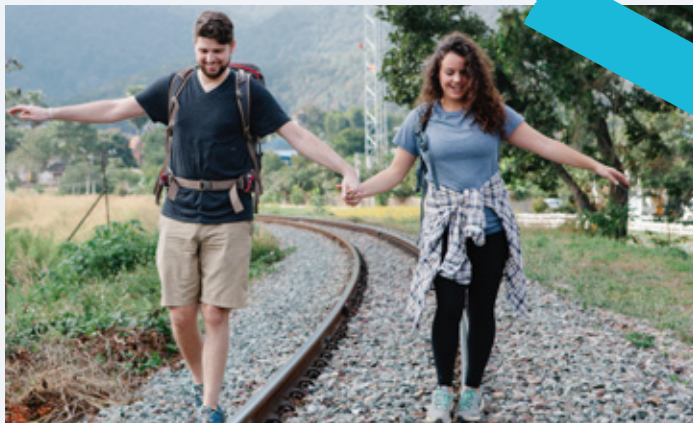
Did you ever draw super heroes as a child and imagine them in all sorts of crazy adventures? Working with your special someone to create new characters and go on new adventures could be just the creative outlet you need.

Have a pizza night

You can grab ingredients from the store and make your own pizza fresh for less than \$20. You'll have a great time creating your own creations (chicken and artichoke anyone?) and save money at the same time.

Take a walk

Isn't everyone's dream date involve walking along a sandy beach at sunset? While you may not live near the ocean, a sunset walk can be just as romantically beautiful no matter where you are—plus it's free.



Visit the library

The library doesn't just have great books, they also often have a wide selection of DVDs too. Pick out some of those old movies you always wanted to see and never did, and then take them home to relax.

Take your \$20 to an arcade

While \$20 won't buy you a dinner anywhere but McDonalds, it can provide hours of enjoyment at an arcade. Have a great time trying to best each others score, and take your prizes home at the end of the date.

Check out community events

Every community has events going on, and most of these are free or very cheap. Enjoy a dog parade, check out a renaissance festival, or take a gardening class together.



Go for a picnic

You don't need something fancy to make a date fun. Pack up your leftovers and spread it out by the lakeside, the view will make it taste even better.

Go stargazing

Remember that library trip? While you're there grab a book on constellations and see how many you can spot together on the next clear night.

Birdwatching

For daytime dates, you can swap stars for birds. It can be fun trying to catch a glimpse of different kinds of birds, and watch them carry about their business. A field guide can help you identify them, and these are also available free at the library. There are lots of great free ways to spend your time together. You don't have to spend a lot of money on flowers or a fancy dinner, all you need is a bit of creativity.

Why do so many of us feel guilty about taking a lunch break?

New research from health psychologists at Staffordshire University explores why some employees feel guilty about taking their legally entitled breaks.

The paper's lead author Dr Mike Oliver explained: "The legally required minimum time for a lunch break at work is 20 minutes, however there is a growing trend nationally for large numbers of people not to take breaks at work, with surveys reporting that between 66% and 82% of workers don't always take their breaks.

"So, how have we got to the point where some people feel guilty about taking their legally allowable break? We were curious to look at the psychological and social behaviors of office workers to understand the enablers and barriers."

With many employees now working from home during the lockdown, Mike believes that some people may find it even harder to take breaks.

"We found that one of the best ways to make sure that you take breaks is to take them with your work colleagues, or to be encouraged to take them by your boss. If they are not physically near you, we may find it harder to act on these social prompts."

For the research, groups of office workers at a large employer of differing levels of seniority were asked about their lunch break habits.

The analysis identified five key themes:

1. People's behaviors depend on various factors - it is not as simple as having those who do take breaks and those who don't.
2. The influence of social and work relationships - if your colleagues take breaks then you are more likely to yourself and vice-versa.
3. Faced with a choice when they're really busy, even if someone wants to take a break, then work "wins".
4. Contradictory feelings - lots of people feel anxious and guilty about taking breaks, although some simply don't.



5. Being 'fair game' for work related matters if you remain at your desk at break times.

Mike, who completed his Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology at Staffordshire University last year, said: "This paper highlights the complex relationships that people have with taking breaks, with others and with their physical environment. Some participants did recognize the importance of taking a break in the middle of the day, but others appeared to convince themselves that by doing a less intense work activity, such as responding to emails, whilst eating their lunch at their desk, would actually be taking a break.

"The greater importance that people appear to be placing on completing their work over the time they give themselves for breaks, or simply the sheer volume and pressure of work, may go some way to explaining this pattern of behavior."

Mike and colleagues recommend further research and organizational changes to support improved workplace health and wellbeing.

He added: "There is mounting concern about the amount of time people spend sitting down at work and not being physically active, so it is really important that people don't put work ahead of breaks and their own physical and psychological health."

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CRUSH

AM Kuska

There's nothing that gets your heart pounding quite like talking to your crush. Even thinking about them or seeing them can sometimes make it difficult to think. You don't have to miss out on a dream relationship because you're too shy to talk to them however, so here are a few tips to help make it happen.

Introduce yourself

If you're not sure how to strike up a conversation with your crush, try dropping a pen or other small item near them. Chances are that they will pick it up for you, and you have a nice opening to introduce yourself in. Try to avoid doing this with lots of friends there or other large groups, as this may make them feel uncomfortable.

Talk indirectly on social media

If you have a friend or coworker who is friends with the person you have a crush on, try replying to the same things that they do. That doesn't mean talking to them as if they were talking to you in the feed, but simply commenting on the same things. By doing so, you can introduce yourself a little bit more subtly, and perhaps get that person interested enough to look at your social media. If your crush ends up choosing to talk with you directly, in a positive way, consider sending them a friend request.

Don't overdo it

Once you finally get the courage to speak to your crush, it can be tempting to keep yourself in their line of sight at all times. This can be downright creepy however, so keep it normal and just talk to them now and then when the opportunity arises.

If there's chemistry between you two, you will connect, so relax and just keep giving your crush opportunities to show they are interested back.

by Shauna Simmons

Planes, trains, and love!

Dr. Jill Lopez

While Amber Elalem works as a vet tech, she's better known for her work on social media. She frequently shares short videos on TikTok about what it's really like to be a vet tech. Her videos include things like what vet techs really think of your dog breed, what your dog is thinking at the vet, and what vets are actually doing with your puppy during curbside. (You guessed it. That longer wait is due to mad puppy play time.)

But, did you know that she owes fate for meeting the love of her life, Dr. Cristen Nichols.

See how fate stepped in to Amber's life and how they keep their romance hot!

How we met:

We met on a plane heading to St. Kitts. We sat next to each other and started talking. It was fate!

When I knew she was the one:

We started out talking on the plane and we bonded over vet med. She was the person who shared my passion of veterinary medicine and could truly understand the good, bad, and ugly of the industry. Most of all we just meshed together very well right off the bat. She was in vet school at the time and we did have to work around school demands to keep our relationship strong.

How we make it work:

Communication is key. We make sure each other feels heard and seen.



"It was fate!"



DATING BY DISNEY

by Dr. Jill Lopez

Indiana veterinarian and inclusion advocate, Dr. Serena Nayee, met her partner Zee, a former vet tech turned artist, at a time when she was more focused on her career than dating. Taking a chance, Dr. Serena asked them if they would like to join her for a dinner and a movie- the movie being a Disney classic.

Hear more in their own words:

THEIR FIRST DATE:

Serena: I asked Vee if they would be interested in joining me for a movie and pizza night, and we watched *Lady and the Tramp* happily ever after.

WHEN THEY KNEW DR. SERENA WAS THE ONE:

Vee: I knew Serena was the one when I saw how passionate she was about her career. As someone who has a strong connection to art, I genuinely love seeing people talk about what they love to do. When Serena shared her story about why she was in vet med and the changes she wanted to make through her nonprofit Chapter VIII, it was just an instant feeling in my heart that told me she was the one.

HOW THEY MAKE IT WORK:

Vee and Dr. Serena: We both try our best to prioritize our individual mental health as well as trying to see things from each others perspective. We always make time to spend together before and after work, even if it means just spending time together playing chess and drinking coffee in the morning, or watching a Netflix episode with popcorn at night. We also try our best to understand each other and the experiences that make us who we are.



Real Life, Real Love

by Dr. Jill Lopez

When you knew he was the ONE

I knew he was the “one” pretty much after our first date. We talked about our family backgrounds, goals for the future, relationship with God over breakfast. I went home and wrote in my journal that I had met the man I would marry but had no idea how it would work out with me graduating and moving to Chicago for my internship and him moving to Florida to work ER. We kept in contact and became official about a year and a half later. We were married in 2010 after 3 years of long distance.

Dr. Joya Griffin may be popping puppy pimples on TV, but when she’s home, she’s home. This star of Nat Geo’s *Pop Goes the Vet* is married to veterinary internist, Dr. Forrest Cummings and they make marriage to medicine work.

She spills the tea on their romance and how they make things work for a family of five!

How he asked you out on your first date

We met at Tuskegee’s symposium. I was a 4th year vet student and had travelled down to visit during my spring break with my best friend and vet school roommate, Dr. Niccole Bruno. Forrest had graduated vet school the year before and was an intern at University of Tennessee. He was back visiting friends (aka partying). I literally fell into his lap trying to find a seat for a lecture. Then we met officially at a party that night. He gave me his number and told me to call him if I had time to meet up before we all left. Of course, I called. We shared a stack of pancakes at our first date at IHOP!

Secrets to making your relationship work

Our secret to making our relationship work is making our relationship a priority. We try to be intentional about having regular date nights even when we are super busy with work and the kids. Those times away from the kids help us to reconnect and have a little breather. We also use a marriage journal to help us communicate and stay connected. On Sunday nights we get the kids to bed early so we can have a few hours to watch a series together and relax before the work week starts.

SHOP WITH US!

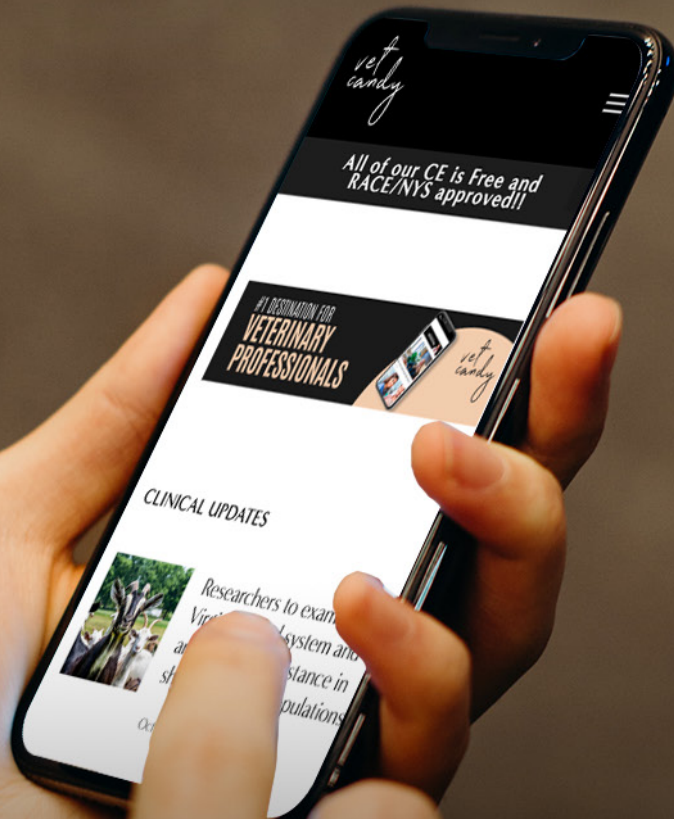


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