



HERE'S A SECRET ...

CE Is a Fun Activity

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They don't even need to be here! I thought as I watched a group of veterinarians contagiously smile and laugh for 3 days. I saw this group attentively sit through lectures in a partially open-air venue, unbothered by the mask requirements in place, the need to pick up headphones for lecture translations, or crowded rooms. They cheered for free shirts and were even dancing at the concert.

No CE requirements brought these veterinarians together, and they still face many of the problems we know all too well and others unique to their location and economy. Yet, this group still reminded me how great veterinary medicine can be. Where was this utopia of inspiration you ask? I was at the Latin American Veterinary Conference in Peru—and it was awesome.

After seeing those veterinarians' excitement, I have a new outlook on VMX and the many other conferences that kick off in the next few months. It's time to make CE an enjoyable experience and get inspired—not stressed—this year! No more rushing from lecture to lecture with knowledge FOMO (fear of missing out), cramming in as many hours as I possibly can until they all blur together in a haze

of PowerPoint slides, new medications, and opening jokes. Remember: You aren't being graded. There are no consequences to only attending the lectures that interest you and skipping the subjects that do not bring you joy. Marie Kondo your conference this year! No one is going to judge you for wearing shorts, sleeping in, or ducking out early for some sun and pool time.

Over the past year, we have slowly worked toward recovering from our isolation, so find your own unique way to reconnect—whether that is with colleagues at busy networking events, quiet dinners with your old vet school friends, or simply enjoying a clean hotel room to yourself! Reconnect with the passions that first brought you to veterinary medicine. Try to recreate the feelings you had attending your first conference fresh out of school: Explore new subjects and topics that excite you in your career journey and reignite your passion for learning. Remember that *you* are the most important part of your CE. I promise your state regulatory board isn't making negative marks for the conference-goers standing in the front row at the concert—so do it! (Or at VMX, roller skating in the exhibit hall.)

Cheer and dance at the concert, load up on free giveaways, and remember that earning CE can be fun. Find a speaker that inspires you, jot down notes, and plan to make changes in your practice. Don't even worry about meeting your required CE hours. There are extra webinars and articles to read all year (check out VetFolio!). Instead, use this time away from your practice to renew not only your license requirements but, most importantly, yourself. **TVP**

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This column is titled "The Secret Life of Vets" so I can talk about the secrets that really should be considered well-known truths. These are the not-so-secret secrets that can help change our thinking and our profession for the better.



Ben Kirchner