



## CULTIVATING A LIFE OF GRATITUDE

*A mindfulness retreat for veterinarians, veterinary technicians/technologists, staff, and veterinary students.*

**Thursday, October 17, 2024 – Sunday, October 20, 2024**

University of St. Mary's of the Lake, Mundelein, Illinois

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Gratitude is considered to be a cornerstone of good mental health. Increasingly, many find it difficult, if not impossible, to feel gratitude amidst a seemingly chaotic world and personal and professional challenges. In this retreat, we will consider what it means to be grateful, how to cultivate it and attend to the mourning that is often required in order for us to be truly grateful.

VIN Foundation is inviting interested members of the veterinary profession the opportunity to take time and participate in a weekend of didactics and dialogues that help participants return to our professional and personal lives with greater clarity, meaning and gratitude. The didactics will be a combination of group discussion and speaker presentation.

*While formal meditation training is not a requirement, in order for this retreat to be most beneficial, familiarity with meditation and yoga practice is highly recommended. Also highly recommended is the ability to maintain a quiet posture for approximately 30 minutes several times daily will be helpful.*

Retreat participants should plan to attend all didactics, group discussions, yoga, art and meditation sessions. There will be ample opportunity for private time, so that participants are able to enjoy the beautiful facilities and grounds of the **University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois** (USML).

**PROGRAM CATEGORY:** Non-Medical

**TOTAL CE CREDITS:** 7

**TOTAL COST:** \$650.00

## COURSE AGENDA

### Thursday, October 17, 2024

**1 PM:** Check-In/Meet fellow attendees and enjoy the beautiful grounds/facilities of USML

**4 PM:** Welcome/Introductions/Michele Gaspar

**5:30-6:15 PM:** Dinner

**7-9 PM:** Movie and Meditation

### Friday, October 18, 2024

**7:30 AM:** Yoga With Gwen Jeun, DVM

**8-9 AM:** Breakfast

**9-11 AM:**

**LECTURE 1:** Envy and Gratitude: Strange Bedfellows

**PRESENTER:** Michele Gaspar, DVM, MA, LCPC

**CE CREDITS: 2**

Michele Gaspar is a veterinarian and psychotherapist. She is a member of the Vets4Vets® initiative of the VIN Foundation and provides one-on-one support to veterinarians and veterinary students with personal and professional challenges. Michele has had a mindfulness practice since 1972 and facilitates an annual mindfulness meditation course on VIN, as well as coordinating the annual mindfulness retreat. In addition to her VIN Foundation activities, she has a private psychotherapy practice in Chicago providing mental health services to physicians and other health care providers.

The lecture will provide background on Melanie Klein's theory regarding envy and gratitude. Klein maintained that gratitude is foundational to good mental health and considered envy to be a normal human emotion that is present when one desires another's capacity. How do we become aware of our envy and how do we develop the gratitude that Klein identified as the antidote to envy? How does envy impact "imposter syndrome" and how does it present in professional and personal relationships? These are some of the questions we will address in the lecture and ensuing discussion.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- Understand Melanie Klein’s theory on the development of gratitude.
- Develop an understanding of how internal “good objects” are fundamental to gratitude.
- Understand how envy appears in our everyday lives and develop coping strategies.

**11-11:30 AM:** Meditation

**12:30-1:15 PM:** Lunch

**1-3 PM:** Free time

**3-5 PM:**

**LECTURE 2:** Is Gratitude a Positive Feedback Loop?

**PRESENTER:** Rabbi Michael Oblath, PhD

**CE CREDITS: 1**

Michael Oblath received a PhD in Biblical History from the University of California at Berkeley and is a retired Reform Rabbi who lives in Anchorage, Alaska. He is an annual presenter at the VIN Mindfulness Meditation retreats and his lectures are geared to making ancient texts and narratives relevant to 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges.

This lecture will consider the theory that we (“beneficiaries”) are more inclined to express gratitude when others (“benefactors”) behave in a way that promotes the beneficiaries’ well-being. Gratitude has been considered the emotion that may be the origin of all virtues. We will consider that gratitude is understood as the motivation for well-being, honesty, social organization, self-esteem and optimism. The lecture will also consider that there may be a toxic form of gratitude. If this is so, how do we avoid this? Can we learn to feel and express gratitude as a moral guide for our lives?

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- Develop an understanding of Michael McCullough’s theory that gratitude is fundamental to the development of other virtues and values.
- Understand the difference between “toxic gratitude” and “genuine gratitude” and develop strategies to avoid the former.
- Develop an ability to learn and feel gratitude as a moral guide for our lives.



**5:30-6:15 PM:** Dinner

**7-8 PM:** Meditation/Discussion

## **Saturday, October 19, 2024**

**7:30 AM:** Yoga With Gwen Jeun, DVM

**8-9 AM:** Breakfast

**9 AM - 12 PM:**

**LECTURE 3:** Finding Gratitude in Mystery

**PRESENTER:** Ann Raney, LCSW

**CE CREDITS: 3**

Ann Raney is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and CEO of Turning Point Behavioral Health Care Center in Skokie, IL. Turning Point has been recognized for its wide-ranging programs aimed at helping children, teens, adults and families access therapeutic services aimed at helping them achieve meaningful and satisfying lives.

In this lecture, Ms. Raney will address how one can develop a gratitude practice to deal with the uncertainty of modern times and the uncertainty and disappointment that often arises in clinical veterinary practice and our personal lives. She will use theory and technique to help participants develop a gratitude practice that enables them to care for themselves, their patients and clients, and loved ones.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- Understand the challenges to the development of gratitude in our professional lives.
- Be able to discuss various theories of gratitude development
- Develop techniques, rooted in theory, that allow for the development of gratitude in professional and personal situations.

**12-12:30 PM:** Meditation

**12:30-1:15 PM:** Lunch

**2-4 PM:** Mindful Art Practice with Jane Charbonneau, DVM

**4-5:30 PM:** Free time



**5:30-6:15 PM:** Dinner

**7-8 PM:** Discussion

**8:30-9 PM:** Meditation

## **Sunday, October 20, 2024**

**7:30 AM:** Yoga With Gwen Jeun, DVM

**8-9 AM:** Breakfast

**9-10 AM:** Meditation

**10 AM- 12 PM:** Discussion/Wrapping Up

**12 PM:** Check out. Safe travels home! See you next year!

