

# Episode 10 | The Impact of the Lies We Believe About Vet Med

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### The Joyful DVM PODCAST

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The lies we believe, the conclusions we draw, and how that creates the very things we don't want for our lives, that's what we're talking about in episode 10.

Welcome to the Joyful DVM Podcast. I'm your host, Veterinarian, and Certified Life Coach, Cari Wise. Whether you're dealing with the challenges in Vet Med, struggling with self-confidence, or you're just trying to figure out how to create a life and a career that you actually enjoy, you'll find encouragement, education, and empowering concepts, you can apply right away. Let's get started.

Hello, my friends. Welcome to episode 10. Today, we're going to take a look at some of the broad sweeping beliefs and assumptions that many of us hold when it comes to our thoughts about Vet Med and our lives and our careers, and what's possible.

I've been thinking about this a lot as I've been talking with my students inside of Vet Life Academy. And even though I've known for a long time that these broad sweeping assumptions existed, I hadn't really dug into it to see exactly what it's creating. And that's what we're going to do today on this episode of the podcast. Broad sweeping beliefs and assumptions about our lives and careers in vet med, some of these beliefs, our own, but most of them are the beliefs of the people that came before us. They're the words that we've heard spoken as we've gotten into our careers. We've kind of absorbed those truths as if they're absolute. We see our own lives through the lens of these beliefs and this influences our own thinking and create some generally accepted, but unintentional mantras. The problem with these mantras is that they're not helpful. Mantras, which are usually just repeated thoughts, things that are chanted intentionally, when we think about a true traditional mantra. These repeated thoughts lead us to draw conclusions that are often very binary. They're very all or nothing type thinking. What result is a settling in of thought patterns and behaviors, many of which we aren't even consciously aware of day in and day out. What we miss is how this sequence of events left unexamined and unquestioned is actually the very thing that creates the unfulfilling lives that we have both in vet med and outside of vet med. Most of us have an awakening of sorts at some point where we do recognize the need and have the desire for change. The solution for many of us is to change jobs or change career paths. And those of us who have done it can share that the change does usually provide some help, but that help and that relief don't last long term. It doesn't become the longterm solution that we'd hoped for.

So here over the next few minutes, we're going to take a look at these broad sweeping assumptions and beliefs that we have about our veterinary careers and our lives as part of the veterinary profession. And we're going to recognize the thought patterns that

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have been created. We're then going to look to see how those thought patterns have influenced our own behaviors and how those behaviors have created a lot of the reality that we're unhappy with today. But, don't worry. I'm not going to leave you in all doom and gloom. I'm also going to show you the opportunities to adjust the results you're creating in your life by just backing it all up a little bit and adjusting the thought patterns that you've accepted. So let's go ahead and dig in.

As we get started is probably not going to be any surprise to you that the majority of the broad sweeping assumptions and belief patterns that we have around veterinary medicine and the challenges of veterinary medicine really boil down to beliefs and thought patterns around time and money. So what are they?

Time. It really comes down to work schedule, time off, and the way that things are scheduled. So we have our own thought patterns and broad sweeping assumptions about work schedules in veterinary medicine. Basically it boils down to this idea that when you work in veterinary medicine, your work schedule is going to suck. So what does that even mean? We are often unhappy with the days of the week that we work, the hours of the day that we work, or the number of days per week that we work. Some flavor of that is typically true for us and so we have this assumption that when you work in the veterinary profession or we've drawn this conclusion, I should say, that when we work in the veterinary profession, we're not going to have a desirable work schedule. Time off is another one. We have time off technically, right? But many of us believe we don't actually have those days to ourselves. And so that leads us to draw a conclusion that you never really get time off when you work in the veterinary profession. Then we have the appointments. Many of us are unhappy with the way that our organizations schedule appointments. Whether it's too many appointments per hour, too short of a timeframe per appointment. Whether it has to even do with the number of staff, to the number of appointments, we typically have something about the appointments that we're unhappy with. And so we have this conclusion drawn that the appointment scheduling is terrible. That is just not good in our veterinary profession. That we could do better there.

Now, what about the money side? The money beliefs all come down to salary and debt. Again, no surprise there. So what are the assumptions that are there? What are the broad sweeping ideas that we are grabbing onto as truth? When it comes to salary, many of us believe there is a cap to how much we can make in veterinary medicine. There's a limit to it. Along with that, many of us also believe that we can't work in veterinary medicine and have a salary that actually sustains our life. I know this is really, really true for a lot of our veterinary technicians. You believe that if you're working as a

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veterinary technician, you cannot make enough money to be able to afford to live. That becomes the lens through which you see your job. But it's not just the veterinary technicians. There are many, many veterinarians and practice managers out there as well who have the same belief. Then there's the debt side of it. We have our beliefs about debt. Some of us have just the general, broad, sweeping belief that having any debt is bad. That's going to influence the actions that you take and the decisions that you make. But along with that, we have specific thoughts and opinions and beliefs about our student loan debt and how that's a really bad thing. How is evidence of a bad decision that we made and how it actually keeps us from being able to live the lives that we want? When we look at our student loan debt as if it's keeping us from living our lives. Then the only path to living our life is to get rid of the student loan debt. That thought is very disheartening because many of us, we don't see a path to getting rid of student loan debt anytime soon.

So the conclusions that we draw from that is we are going to have to wait to start living our lives. What's so interesting when we take a look at these broad sweeping assumptions and these thought patterns that are so common inside of the veterinary profession. What's so interesting is that those thought patterns lead us to draw conclusions and we've gone through some of them. But there are some very binary or very all or nothing conclusions or decisions if you will, that we associate with these different thought patterns. We're not even aware of it, but it's happening. For example, a lot of us are believing that we can either do more. So see more appointments, work more days, or we can be less frazzled. We can be less tired to either work more and see more and do more. Or you're less tired. You're less frazzled. You're less stressed. It's an all or nothing kind of situation. And when it's an all or nothing type situation, the only path to becoming less frazzled and less tired and less stressed is then to do less. We're also many of us believing that we're either spending time working and focusing on work and focusing on our careers, or we're putting our focus on our hobbies and our outside interests. One or the other. We don't see any path to having both. Similarly, when it comes to the money side of things, we are thinking we can either pay down our debt so we can put all of our resources and pay down our debt, or we can live comfortably. So we're either going to focus on paying down our debt, or if we're going to focus on living a comfortable life with the money that we have. It's an either-or situation. Kind of along the same lines when it comes to pay. We think that we either work where we currently are and accept the low pay, or we leave to find a job that pays a higher wage. So stay for low wage or leave for a higher wage. Very binary. Very all or nothing type decisions. Whenever we believe that we're up against these all or nothing type decisions, what results is a lot of this discomfort. That part we're usually aware of. That we're uncomfortable. That we're stressed out. That we're irritated. But why is that? Many of us

actually start to begrudge our jobs and so we start to look for different ones. So we think that all of this is happening because of the jobs themselves, because of the career itself. And so we start to look for a new one. We start to maybe look for a better schedule if we're thinking specifically about what we're believing about poor scheduling. They do a terrible job scheduling here. I'm going to look for someplace else that does it better. We also start to, I believe that we're trapped. So we're trapped in the job and we're trapped in the life that we have with the job. And because of that, we start to approach every single day with resentment. This really comes into play when we are believing that we can't find an alternative. That an alternative that pays better or provides a better work-life balance doesn't exist. And so we believe that we're just trapped and because many of us believe that work-life balance and financial abundance are not available to us as veterinary professionals, that's really where that victimization and feeling very, very trapped comes from. Because if you view the entire profession as being one that does not allow work-life balance or financial abundance, and this is the career you chose, and you feel like you can't do anything different with your life because you've committed to this and you've got this debt, then you are going to feel very trapped and you are going to feel very much like a victim of the profession.

This all sounds pretty miserable at this point, right? But just stick with me because we're just kind of picking our way through what's been happening so far. All of this together ends up being a bit of a settling in.

So it's kind of like when this reality that we have becomes accepted. So by reality, what I mean is like, what we, our opinion. Like what we have decided reality is. And again, like I said, a life without work-life balance, a life without financial abundance, a life with terrible work schedules and poorly booked appointments and salaries that are limited. All of those things, those sentences that just keep going over and over and over in our minds as beliefs, those things, we keep telling ourselves, the things we keep talking with our colleagues about, those things become the absolute truth. And we kind of settle into those as reality as if they are absolute truth. When we settle in to those things as reality, what that means is that you believe that it's your reality. And when we're believing that this is just the way that it is, it blocks any opportunity for our brain to find alternate solutions.

Here's the deal when it comes to the brain and the way that your thinking works. When you present the brain with information, it is going to seek evidence to prove it true. It's going to look for the evidence all around you to support your thought. It's also going to offer you actions and options for actions to continue to prove that true as well. If we go into this and we start to absorb all these broad sweeping assumptions from the people

who've gone before us, and then we tack on a few of our own, and they're not helpful, we are going to continue to gather information, to try to convince us that it's true. It's not malicious. It's just the way that the brain works. But we have allowed it to get very good at showing us why these assumptions are correct because the brain just does that, right? The brain just looks for evidence all around us and we'll point it out to you to prove that it's true.

The only way that we kind of stop this is to intentionally consider alternatives. This is the other amazing thing about the brain. When you give your brain a problem to solve, it will go to work solving it. But once you've settled into these assumptions as being absolute truths for the veterinary community, you're not even offering it the option to find different alternatives. It really can be as simple as asking yourself, what if this isn't true? What if this isn't an absolute truth? What if my assumptions have been wrong by simply offering up the option that maybe, just maybe these assumptions and these broad sweeping beliefs that we have about veterinary medicine might not actually be absolute truth, that allows your own very intelligent brain to go to work trying to solve the problem without offering it this opportunity to do that. We settle into these absolute truths and we stop looking for solutions. We stop exploring possibilities, and we really shut off the bright side of everything.

Have you ever noticed how hard it is to look at the bright side when you're really deep in the darkness of this profession? Once we actually though open up that door and provide an opportunity for the brain to go to work, it will do that. It will go to work finding solutions. It's going to show you how you can earn more money. It's going to show you how you can spend less money if that's what you want to do. It's going to show you ways to intentionally use your time in a better way. It's also going to show you your opportunities to say no.

Those binary decisions, those binary conclusions, stop being binary. They were actually never meant to be binary. Work or do other activities. No, my friends. Work and do other activities. Pay down debt or live comfortably. No! Pay down debt and live comfortably. Do more. See more appointments, or be less frazzled. No! Do more. See more appointments and learn to do it less frazzled. Low pay and this job or higher pay at another. No! How about, this job and higher pay. If we start to insert the 'and' in all of the places where we currently have the 'ors', I can do this, or I can do that. If we can instead consider, I can do this and I can do that, then our brain will go to work, helping us to figure out how to make that true. If we leave it as, 'or', you are going to always be in an all or nothing decision kind of situation. And all or nothing, no matter which side of the sea you land on, isn't fulfilling. It isn't creating what you want for your future. Instead, if we

can just allow ourselves to consider that the broad sweeping assumptions about veterinary medicine and about life in veterinary medicine, about the time available to us and the way we spend our time as veterinary professionals, about the money that we can make and the debt that we have, the resolution of that debt and the ability to have abundant incomes, if we can just allow ourselves to consider maybe all of that is also possible, then our brain will go to work, helping us to find the solutions, to bring those things into reality for us individually. But if we never shake it loose, if we stay settled into these assumptions of veterinary medicine, we will just continue to create more of the same. We will never tap into the power of our own minds to find solutions that are available to us. Instead, we settle into the beliefs that these things just don't exist for us because we've decided on veterinary medicine is our career.

This is why my friends, many of us decide to leave the profession. It's because we have really bought into these assumptions about what is possible for us here and what life is a veterinary professional look like, we've bought into those assumptions as absolute truth. And on their own, yeah, it's miserable. It's no wonder why many of us want to leave. But I also don't see as that there's many, many of us that choose this profession intentionally day after day after day. And we have found a different way to do it. A way that affords us more time to pursue the things other than veterinary medicine that also fulfill us. A way to earn more money than the people would say is possible in this profession. It is possible. And the main thing that differentiates those who go on to create fulfilling, happy, abundant lives as a veterinary professional and those that don't is simply the ability and the willingness to consider alternative perspectives. And then to do some of the work required to set some boundaries and to learn how to say no. That's a whole other can of worms. But those boundaries and learning how to say no and learning how to say yes to the things that are important to you, those are the keys to help you start to move forward. But you can't even do that until you shake loose these long-held belief patterns and consider maybe, just maybe you were wrong about what you believed. It's totally fine to be wrong. It's totally fine to change our minds about what we have long-held as the assumptions and absolute truth about lies in veterinary medicine.

Let's do that work. Let's start to wiggle it around and consider the alternatives and give ourselves the benefit of the doubt that we can actually figure this out. That we can have veterinary professions and have fulfilling abundant lives.

If you want to learn more about this, I definitely recommend that you join me in my free setting boundaries workshop that's going to be coming up here in a few weeks. I'll drop a link to that in the show notes, you can join us@joyfulddm.com/workshop. It's going to be a free workshop on setting boundaries and setting and understanding boundaries really

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is one of the first action steps that you can take to start to turn this all around from you. The mind works starting to consider whether or not these absolute truths need to be held moving forward as absolute, that's going to take a little more time, but we're definitely going to talk about it at the workshop. That's going to wrap it up for this week and I'll see you next time.

Thank you for listening to the Joyful DVM Podcast. If you'd like to learn more about the concept and ideas discussed here, and how to apply them to your own life to create confidence and empowerment for yourself, you'll love Vet Life Academy. To check it out and learn more, visit [joyfuldvm.com/vetlifeacademy](http://joyfuldvm.com/vetlifeacademy). And if you're loving this podcast, I'd appreciate it if you'd share it with your friends and leave us a review on iTunes.

We can change what's possible in VetMed together.