

# Episode 31 | The Decision To Quit Vet Med - Part 1

## FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT



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Thinking about changing jobs or leaving the career of Veterinary Medicine altogether, that's what we're talking about in Episode 31.

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.

Hey, everybody. Welcome to Episode 31. Today is the first part of a two-part series about leaving your job in Vet Med. So if you're thinking about quitting your job in Vet Med, switching to another veterinary job, or maybe getting out of the profession altogether, this two-part series is definitely going to be something that's for you.

Today, we're going to talk about all the reasons why we might be considering leaving our jobs or leaving the profession altogether. Oftentimes when we're getting to that point where we're ready just to get out of there, what we're actually doing is trying to find a way to feel better day to day. What we've recognized is that our current job situation makes us feel miserable, or at least that's the conclusion that we draw. And as we consider the life that we have in the job that we're in, a lot of us believe that the solution is to change the job. And let's face it. When we change jobs, we do feel better at least for a while. But if we do that enough times, we start to draw the conclusion that it's the profession itself as a whole that's not for us. This can actually lead us to miss out on a lot of opportunities. So today what I want to look at a little bit more closely is why it is that we don't like our jobs in the first place.

Many of us, like I said, we're trying to get out of these jobs to find a way to feel better; to find a situation that we're happier in, we're seeking happiness. Maybe we're seeking more satisfaction, more support, those kinds of things, and by being able to say the reasons why we're leaving, it gives us a lot of clarity around what we believe about where we are at right now. So why is it that you're thinking about leaving that particular job?

I know for me, I can go back and I can think about several jobs that I had, and I can give you the reasons why I decided to leave. The reasons often were things like, "I just didn't like the leadership; I didn't feel like they had my back; what they said in staff meetings and what they said in hospital meetings and things like that are never followed through; that it was inconsistent." I remember using the word bait and switch a lot as well. What I thought a job was going to be like was vastly different once I actually got there. So the way that it was advertised upfront, what was promised during the interview process, ended up being a very different experience once I was actually in the role. That kind of disconnect there. I was very frustrated by that and I'm sure many of you have experienced similar things and you're very frustrated as well by those kinds of things, and we think about the reasons why we want to leave.

I think it's really interesting for us to consider how much we blame the job for not being good enough; for not being what we thought it would be; for not being what it should be, what we believe that it should be. And we might be right about that. Let me just give you that. We might be right about all the things that we've concluded about the job, but what we miss in blaming the job for us leaving is that we've given all of our power away to the job itself.

So it's true that we can be in jobs, whether it's in Veterinary Medicine or not, and have those positions not be the right fit for us. It's true that we can recognize that we are unhappy in our current employment situation. And it's true that we can come up with all the reasons why we aren't happy. But what I want us to recognize is just how often the reasons why we are unhappy are things outside of ourselves.

I know that you guys have heard me talk about this many, many times before that happiness is only created from the inside. And I do absolutely believe that. That all being said, it's also possible to have things on the outside the situations, the circumstances that you will, that just are not a great fit for us individually.

Unfortunately, when it comes to jobs and job satisfaction and the decision as to whether or not to stay or leave, many of us do one of two things. We either blame the job for not being good enough, or we blame ourselves for not being good enough. And we completely miss what's actually happening. When we blame the job for not being what we think it should be, that puts us in a very defeated position. When the job isn't what we expected and when we really do believe it should be different. And I'm talking about things like the schedule perhaps or the way that the appointments themselves are put into the scheduler - so like the number of appointments per hour; talking about things like the way the hospital is staffed - so the support staff to doctor ratio; talking about things like how the staff is trained and what responsibilities they have and what kind of follow-through there is for anybody in regard to the meeting the expectations of the roles that they have, and those expectations oftentimes are either verbally communicated to us or they're in some kind of employee manual that we then can refer to and recognize that the standards outlined in the hospital employee manual are not being actually upheld or enforced throughout the hospital. So that can be very frustrating.

Another thing that can be very frustrating is the quality of medicine. So we can blame the quality of medicine at the hospital where we practiced for the reason why we've decided to leave. It's just not the quality of medicine that we want to practice. It's either better or worse, but it's not what we want to practice and so therefore that's a reason, that's an excuse or justification that we might give to leave.

Maybe we talk about the hours. Maybe we talk about the clients themselves, that it's not the quite

type of client that we want to serve. Maybe we talk about the owners, that the owner doesn't have integrity.

These kinds of things that we use to justify our reason for leaving, when they're all outside of us like this, what we totally miss is that it puts us in a bit of the victim mentality. This job wasn't good enough and therefore it just was never going to work out. It puts us in a state of superiority too. So it's kind of weird, right? Like, so you could be a bit of a victim of the circumstance, but at the same time, that being super judgmental of it puts us in this superiority complex at the same time. So no wonder we're so uncomfortable in these jobs when we're off and evaluating the jobs in these ways.

Now on the flip side of that, what's often also going on is the way that we are internally evaluating our own performance in these jobs. And if we're real honest with ourselves, a lot of the time, we are unhappy with our performance. We don't believe that we're good enough. We don't believe that we know enough. We don't believe that we can try hard enough to meet the expectations that are set. Now, what's really interesting about that is that the expectations that we have for our performance in a job are typically expectations that we set for ourselves.

Now, yeah, for sure, sometimes we will work at a job where we do have benchmarks of the number of clients that we see per day or per month and an average client transaction and those types of things. But I'm talking about the way you personally evaluate your own performance. Odds are, if you're like most of us here in the veterinary profession, you're really, really hard on yourself. You don't believe that you're meeting the expectations that are in front of you. They aren't even defined, but you're pretty sure that you're failing at them. You also may be speaking to yourself with sentences like, "I just can't do it. I'm just not able. There's just not enough time. There are not enough resources. There's no way I can possibly do all of these things." That kind of internal dialogue does actually influence our day to day experience pretty significantly because all of those things that we believe about ourselves and our contribution and our ability to contribute to our jobs, all of those things have an emotional impact. And when we take the two pieces together, our constant critical evaluation of the hospital itself - including the facilities, the scheduling, the leadership, the support staff, the peer group, all of it - and then we couple that with our constant evaluation of ourselves internally, which is often on the negative side - how we could be better; we should be better; we should be faster; we should be more efficient; we should know more; we should be as good as they are; we are less than - that kind of self-talk. Those two things together create a net negative emotional state. So our time spent at work is a very unhappy, uncomfortable experience because of the constant focus on what needs to be different than it is, whether that's the hospital or ourselves. These are the reasons that many of us often try to flee from Veterinary Medicine.

So whether fleeing from the job to go to another job because we're believing that it's going to be better somewhere else, or getting out of the profession altogether because we've tried to change a

few times and we recognize a pattern that it gets better for a while and then it turns around and gets bad again, and so we conclude Veterinary Medicine isn't for us and we just, we get out of there altogether.

It makes a lot of sense that we're just trying to feel better, but the downside is the feeling better about it is short term and it doesn't solve the real problems, or even give us the opportunity to ask the questions that actually have the most impact. And the question that will actually have the most long-term impact on us is simply, WHY - why beyond the answers that I've already given; why beyond the tactical, here are the things that the hospital that is wrong; and why beyond the internal here are the things that are wrong with me. But the deeper why to that, why do either of those things even matter. At the end of the day, those things only matter because of the way that they make you feel. And when we are feeling uncomfortable, we are feeling inadequate, we are feeling frustrated as the main kind of most common way of feeling day in and day out on any job, of course, we don't want it to be that way.

Where the confusion often comes in is we recognize that we don't want to feel that way and we think about changing jobs, and many of us get stuck at that point. So some of us just go ahead and jump and change jobs to feel better and it works for a while like I said. Then we may try that a few times and conclude maybe Veterinary Medicine isn't for us. And so we get stuck in this limbo of whether to leave or to stay in Veterinary Medicine as a whole, but others of us get caught back in that first or second job. Feeling we're at a crossroads where we need to make a decision as to whether or not to stay or to go from this current position, but being lost on how to make the decision itself; being afraid of making the wrong decision and just ending up in the same situation again.

We recognize we're very unhappy where we are, and we can give the reasons why - all those external and internal reasons, but we're frozen in our ability to make any kind of change that's actually useful because of our fear of making the wrong choice; because of our fear quite honestly of just ending up exactly where we already are. And that by itself is kind of interesting because why would we be afraid of ending up where we already are? We already know the worst-case scenario because we're experiencing it right now. The reason we're afraid of it is because we don't actually understand our decision-making process at all.

We don't actually understand what it is that we're trying to achieve when we consider changing jobs. All we know for sure is that we're unhappy where we are, that we don't think it's something that we can continue doing. We often say things like, "I just can't do it anymore. The expectations are too much. There's too much pressure. There's too much client drama", like those kinds of things and we just want all of that to stop. And so we all want that to stop, we think the solution is to leave the job or leave the profession. And we've made that decision on some level, and then we're just stuck. We're stuck believing that this job isn't for us, but we're not taking any action to move away from it.

Why is that? It's because we don't really know where to go next. And when we're stuck in that bit of limbo, I think it's a really good opportunity for us just to take a minute, to understand in a better level, why it is that we want to leave and what it is that we think we're going to accomplish.

See, all of the confusion in this decision-making from this type of perspective comes because all of the reasons that you're thinking about leaving have to do with what's wrong with where you're at - either what's wrong with the hospital itself or what's wrong with you. So we're only focusing on what we want to get away from. And when we try to make decisions based on what we don't want without any consideration for what we do want, that's why the decision-making becomes really hard. That's why confusion tends to be the most dominant response; the result that we get is just more confusion - I don't know what to do; I don't know how to fix this; I don't know how to assure that this isn't going to happen again. It's all confusion because right now the only primary factor, the most significant factor in making the decision to make a change has been the desire to get away from something. Something tangible, like the actual circumstances of where we work; something a little bit less tangible, like the way that we feel when we are at work; and something that we probably don't really overtly recognize which is what we believe about our ability to do the job in our current situation. We're just trying to get away from those things because if we can get away, then we'll be happier. We do believe that. But without understanding what it is that we believe will make us happy, we're just destined to make the same decisions or make the same, create the same results again. I think that's a better way to say it. We're just destined to create the same results again. We keep making different decisions, but we ended up making decisions that create the same results. And if you do it a few times it becomes very, very frustrating.

So if you're thinking about changing your job or leaving the career altogether, that first question you want to ask yourself is why. And why from the standpoint of "why am I deciding now to make that?" The first answer to your why is going to be all the reasons; all the justifications about what's wrong with the hospital, what's wrong with your ability to be able to perform in that environment. That's going to be the justification that you come up with immediately to explain why it is that you want to leave, or why is it you want to quit, or why is it that you want out of the profession. But that's not the why that we're looking for here. We want the bigger picture of why. Are you making a decision because you're trying to get away from something?

And if you're trying to get away from something, the second question has to be where are you going? That's the one we don't intentionally ask. That's the one that almost becomes the afterthought. And because it almost becomes the afterthought that's why it's so common that we end up getting into jobs where we just repeat the entire experience all over again. We're so busy getting away from the discomfort of where we are that we don't really pay attention to where we're going. There's a much better way to make this decision.

Now it is true that we can learn to be happier in any job, just by learning about our own thought processes. What we think creates the emotional feelings that we experience and those emotional feelings then drive actions. We can see that in play whenever we're thinking about quitting our job because almost all the time, the reason we give for wanting to quit has to do with the way that we feel - either the way that we feel about the environment itself, about the organization, the leadership, the staffing, the scheduling, and all those things; or the way we feel about our own abilities to perform in that environment. So it is a feeling that then drives the actions, and in this case, the actions which would include things like deciding to leave the job, searching for a new job, all of that.

Think-Feel-Act. So we think all these things about the environment itself, the job, the organization. We think these things about ourselves. In both cases, we have emotions that are created by those thoughts and then those emotions drive the actions often in some form of just getting the heck out. Think-Feel-Act - makes perfect sense. But what we miss is the backside of that. That may get us out of that job, but it's not intentionally moving us toward another one. And those reasons when it all comes down to it, I don't know that those are reasons that we're going to love longterm, those reasons for leaving. Are we really going to love them long-term? 10 or 15 years from now, when you look back at the reason that you left the job, are you still going to like your reason? Some of us will, but some of us won't. And my best advice for you is going to be always to make a decision for a reason that you actually like.

Let's not make an emotional decision. We don't practice medicine from an emotional standpoint, and we don't have to make any decisions about the rest of our lives from a strictly emotional standpoint either. When we do that it may often lead us into directions that we don't actually want to go. We're trading off the long-term benefit and goals in life that we're trying to create for the short term gain and the immediate ability to feel better. That's just never the best trade-off for us.

So in this part one of, if you're thinking about living your Veterinary Medicine career or your job things to consider, I want you to start out here and think about why. Come up with all the reasons why it is that you're thinking about leaving. Why is this not the right job? You're going to be able to come up with a lot of answers. And then I want you to look at those answers and ask yourself if you like your reasons. We want to get real honest with ourselves about those reasons. We want to make sure that the reasons we identify are truly facts and not just opinions that could be completely misinterpreted. And I mean, misinterpreted by you is your opinion of the situation today, something that might be different tomorrow or might be different three years from now when you look back at the exact same things that happened.

If the answer is yes to that, then the reasons for leaving maybe a little shaky. And I'm not telling you not to leave. I'm just telling you to be aware of why you're leaving. When those reasons are shaky,

those things that you blame are a little bit questionable, just realize it's more about you getting away from the way that you feel than it is you heading towards something different that you actually want.

This is the trickiest part of the whole deal because many of us don't know what we want. We worked so hard to get into this job that once we got into it, we stopped asking, "What do I want next? What do I want now? What do I want for my life moving forward?" Instead, we drop into this default mode of simply evaluating our current life against a standard that we leave undefined and interpreting the success of it based on how we feel. None of those things are great measures by which to evaluate your existence. I promise you there is a much better way.

The much better way is the way that puts you back in charge of your own decisions. You decided to take this job, and every day you decide to go to work there, but whether or not the job is meeting expectations or you're meeting expectations can never be evaluated simply by the way that you feel.

The way that we feel is flaky. The way that we feel is variable. The way that we feel is based on what we're thinking about at any given moment in time. Instead, let's make decisions not based on how we feel, but based on data points of true analysis that we can evaluate. The reason why this becomes so important is because when you actually start working toward creating the life that you want, you're going to have a framework that you want to work toward. There are going to be so specific goals there, and right now, most of us are living a life without any kind of goals; without any kind of vision of what we're trying to create. And instead, we're just evaluating the value of our lives against the way that we feel. If we don't feel happy; if we feel frustrated; if day in and day out the net emotional state, if you will, that we experience is negative; then we're determining that we're doing our life wrong. And that part of that is doing our job wrong. It's the wrong job, or I would be happy. It's the wrong life, or I would be happy. And that's just untrue.

Happiness doesn't come from the job. And happiness doesn't really come from life itself either. It's only created by what we believe about our lives and what about ourselves and about our jobs. And this gets really confusing when we recognize that we're unhappy, but we don't really, really understand why.

So I know this is a lot to consider, as you're thinking about changing your career, changing your job perhaps, or getting out of it altogether. But what I want to leave you with is just simply that question that I've kind of asked about 17 different ways here, during this episode, which is, "Why is it that you're leaving?" If your immediate answer comes back with all the things that are wrong with where you work and all the things that are wrong with you in that position, I want you just to really consider those things a little bit closely, more closely. Are they true? Are you sure? Are they facts? Because what's probably happening is if you get real honest, the reason that you're thinking about leaving has

more to do with trying to get away from the way that you feel when you're at work than it does with all those things that you identify.

You're probably believing that if all of those things that you identified were fixed or were better, or how you thought they should be, that you would feel better. And so that's the draw of changing jobs because we are looking for a way to feel better, and we think the new job is going to have all the stars aligned, everything happening the way that we want it to happen, and then we will feel better there. At the very least, we at least won't be here anymore. That's only half of the equation. And as you can see, there's a lot of opportunities for us to get confused in this line of thought, get confused in trying to answer these questions, and to make decisions that we all ultimately then second-guess down the road. There is a much better way to do this.

And coming up in the next episode, I'm going to actually share a framework that will help you put some structure and some reality, and some data points into this decision-making process so you can make the decision of changing your job or changing your career from something other than simply the indication of how you feel; give it something with a little more structure and a little bit more quantitative analysis, if you will so that you can feel a little bit more assured by the decision that you ultimately make.

At the end of the day, guys, when we make any kind of decision, we want to make sure that we like our reasons. And when we make decisions from a purely, emotional standpoint, it's really hard to like those reasons long-term. The last thing you want to do is beat yourself up and second-guess the decision that you've made.

I'll leave you with this: no matter what you decide to do, you're going to be fine. The job itself isn't ruining your life. The next one's not really going to make it any better. You have the ability to create whatever you want for yourself, and you're resilient. You are capable and you're equipped with everything that you need to create the life that you want to have. You have a purpose here. And part of your journey is figuring out exactly where you fit; exactly how your gifts and your purpose are supposed to play out and be influenced by this world. You're still figuring that out and that's okay. We're all still figuring it out. We're never going to get to the point that we've arrived there. So just allow yourself to experience the journey, to make some decisions, to make some changes, but also consider that the most impactful changes you will make for yourself are going to be the ones when you're making a change to head towards something different rather than to run away from something that's existing in the present time.

Alright, my friends, 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 Vet Med together.