

Episode 40 | Breaking Free of Vet Med

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Why breaking free of Vet Med has nothing to do with the job and everything to do with you, that's what I'm talking about in Episode 40.

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 40. Today, I want to talk a little bit about breaking free of Vet Med. I'm not talking about the need to leave the profession, though, for some of us, that is the right path. What I want to talk about is the idea to break free from the box that we've put ourselves in, as part of this profession.

What we've done, and many of us haven't even realized it, and it's very subtle is that as we've joined this profession, we've come into it with just one thing in common. Now there may be others, but there's one main thing that we all have in common when it comes to being Veterinary professionals, and that is that we work in the Veterinary profession. That's the one thing that we have in common. Now that's not to say that we don't have other things in common as well, but it's that one thing that we tend to measure everything else against. We measure our worth and our success and our happiness against other people who share this one thing with us, and it gets us into a lot of trouble. This is what I'm talking about when I say we need to break free of Veterinary Medicine. What we need to break free from is the idea that there is a right way to live your life as a Veterinarian or a Veterinary Technician, as a practice manager, as a business owner; that there is a right way to do it because there isn't.

We each have our own journey here. We each have a purpose. We each have a mission and we each have our own experiences. Although we have this one thing in common, which is Veterinary Medicine, if we try to turn that thing into a set of rules and into a means of measure - the way that we evaluate - if you will, how we're doing in our own lives, we're going to lose every single time because we were never meant to do that.

Veterinary Medicine is a choice that we made. At some point, it was the choice, and what many of us do is as we move through our lives and as we grow and as our lives change and evolve, we get to the point that the experience that we have, day in and day out, in Veterinary Medicine, in the way that we have done it up until that point becomes a bit intolerable. We recognize that we aren't happy and we want to turn and blame the profession for that, and it makes sense that we would because that's the tangible thing that we can control, right? We can decide what we do for a career. So some of us, decide to get out of Veterinary Medicine in order to feel better and it does work. For some of us, it works at least for a while. It doesn't tend to work long-term, but it does work for a while because

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eventually, even if you leave Veterinary Medicine, you get to that point again, where you just feel like something's missing; where you recognize that you don't want to continue moving forward in your life the way that you have been in the past. This box that we put ourselves into in Veterinary Medicine tends to perpetuate that and I think makes it even worse.

As I said, we came into this, we have this one decision in common, which was to pursue a career in Veterinary Medicine. But what we forget as we've become Veterinary professionals is that we are so much more than just our job. We are so much more than our professional label. We are more than Veterinarians. We are more than Veterinary Technicians. We are more than practice managers, and we were never meant to be just that new role that we engaged in. When we forget that or when we don't even consider it, we actually don't get to know who we actually are and it's who we are at our core that actually matters. The rest of it doesn't.

It's when we're trying to become who we think we should be that we really suffer and we become frustrated and we become overwhelmed and we question our own existence and our own worth. What I want us to do is just take a step back and just allow ourselves permission to consider that the career we chose does not define the people who we are. That what you do as a job is only a tiny little piece of your entire existence and how you become fulfilled and happy and peaceful. It has very little to do with what happens day in and day out in your job and everything to do with how well you know yourself as an individual. It is this ability to get to know who you are uniquely; to recognize that you're supposed to be different from everybody else. So you really were just one of you created through the permission to explore that, that we can actually find that peace in any kind of situation; that we can actually learn to be happy in any job, in any environment, because who you are is not defined by the things that you engage in, day in and day out. That who you are never actually changed.

Many of us haven't taken the time or even recognized that we have the ability to consider our lives from this kind of perspective; to recognize that the decision to pursue a career in this field was one decision and that for those people who are fulfilled and joyful and content and feeling very purposeful and driven in Veterinary Medicine, that doesn't mean that they're doing it right and everybody who doesn't have that experience is doing it wrong. The only thing that that means is that perhaps for those people, the decision to pursue Veterinary Medicine, that first decision that we all made, and then the subsequent decisions that they are continuing to make as we all are, are simply just more aligned with who they are as an actual person; who they're supposed to be in this world; how they are supposed to contribute. And perhaps for those of us who find ourselves frustrated; for those of us who now doubt that we made a good choice by pursuing this career; for those of us who keep thinking to ourselves, "I just can't do this anymore!", maybe the lesson here is not that you made a wrong choice in the first place, but that you simply just made your first choice and that your opportunity lies in getting to know why you made that choice, seeing the lessons in that choice, and then giving yourself permission to move forward in a way that's maybe not traditional as far as how the world works.

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Here's what I know for sure, that there are no rules in this life. That we get to decide who we are and what we are about and what we want to do next. That is always something that we get to control ourselves. There are no accidents. There are no mistakes. You did not make a mistake going into Veterinary Medicine. But if at your soul level, if you are restless; if you are searching; if you are questioning your entire existence in Veterinary Medicine, I want you to listen to that. I don't want you to just grab it and run away. That is not what I'm talking about, but I want you to question why. What is it that you're yearning for? What is it that is missing for you? Because somewhere in there is a piece of who you are that you have yet to explore. You may have the complete ability to explore it and stay in this career and many of us will do exactly that because as we explore that, and as we figure out who we are, how we're meant to serve, what we are about, what we believe, and we decide all of that intentionally, we will see the opportunities in this career field to do that. For others of us, we will see this career field as the stepping off point; as the first step in our journey.

At our heart, in our core, if we recognize and allow ourselves, give ourselves permission to really consider what it is that lights us up in Veterinary Medicine and in life; what it is that we are passionate about; what it is that we are interested in, we may find that our passions and our interests are not anchored in traditional Veterinary Medicine. Here's the most important thing for you to hear, that's okay. You didn't make a mistake going into Veterinary Medicine. If you realize at some point later in your journey that what you are really about; what drives you; what you're passionate about; what excites you is not day in & day out veterinary practice, that doesn't negate the value of the first decision at all. This is your journey. It was all intentional and it was only by going through the things that we have been through up until this point that we are at a point to question what we want to come next and to evaluate and review and see the lessons in what we've already experienced. It's all just a perpetual journey of learning. When we cut off the ability to learn; when we put ourselves inside this box with all these rules where "I should just be happy because I'm fortunate to have a job and a lot of people don't have a job and a lot of people don't have skills and I got to go to school and I spent all this money to get this education, so, therefore, I must continue in this job moving forward or in this profession", and we put all these rules around us that is soul-crushing confinement. It was never meant to be that way. Those rules are simply human-made rules. They're not true. They're mind games that our brain uses because here's what the brain knows. The brain knows that no matter how you actually feel right now, whether you're happy or sad or angry or frustrated or hopeless, the brain knows that no matter how you feel in this exact moment that you are alive and the brain's primary focus is to keep you alive. The whole point of having a brain is to keep the species alive. That's what the mind does. It keeps you alive, but it doesn't have you flourishing.

Alive is better than flourishing when it comes to the brain. So when we consider stepping out into something different; stepping out and exploring what's actually on our heart to explore; to really purposely lean more into what actually fills us up and lights us up, that scares the mind a little bit, because you're stepping into the uncertainty. You're stepping outside of the rules and it is the rules

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according to the mind that has kept you safe and has kept you alive. So it's totally normal for us to feel a little nervous, but that's where we have to really consider, "What is it that I want? What is it that I want my life to be about?" You get one shot at this. You get to do this one time, and this life is yours to live however you want to live. It is yours to determine what success and failure look like, and so my wish for you today is that you just consider what boundaries have you put on your own potential by simply believing the rules of the world. What have you squashed down inside of you that lights you up; that makes you happy; that fulfills you; that excites you, simply because your mind would have you believe it's not practical; that it's not responsible; that it's not a good use of your education? What are you pushing away that keeps coming up to the surface no matter how hard you try? Give yourself the opportunity to look at that, and remember that you are here for a reason; that you were created on purpose; that you have an intentional mission in this world, and all of those things you're trying to push away with not much success is only creating more suffering and misery for you, and perhaps you just need to give yourself permission to explore who you really are and move forward toward what your heart actually wants for your life.

Alright, my friends, I'm going to leave you with that. I hope you have a great rest of the 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 concepts 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. 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.