

# Episode 57 | Vet Med Alignment Part 3: Score ACMF

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The **Joyful DVM**<sup>TM</sup>  
PODCAST

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for **Veterinary  
Professionals**

with **Dr. Cari Wise**  
Veterinarian  
Certified Life Coach

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The challenges and opportunities associated with Vet Med Career Alignment score ACMF, that's what we're talking about in Episode 57.

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 57. Today is part three in a four-part series on Vet Med Career Alignment. If you haven't had a chance to take the Vet Med Career Alignment Score quiz, jump over to [joyfuldvm.com/quiz](https://joyfuldvm.com/quiz) to get your score. Today, we're going to be talking about the score ACMF - Aligned Choice, Misaligned Fit. So if your score falls into that bucket, then you definitely want to listen up, and even if it doesn't, there are some tips and pearls in here that can be really useful for you.

We've been talking a lot over the last few weeks about career alignment, specifically, vet med career alignment. It's a really important topic because the alignment of our career if it is fitting into what we want for our entire lives is an essential component to creating the lives that we want and actually being happy and joyful and feeling like that we contribute in the world. That satisfaction that we get from our job can be really impacted by whether or not we are in the right job, or if we're in the right career. This all starts at the top level with career alignment itself. If you didn't catch my discussion about career alignment and job alignment, and the differentiation between those, jump back to [episode 55](#) and take a listen to that.

When we think about our lives, we think about our jobs in veterinary medicine, oftentimes we think about how we struggle. We think about the challenges and there are wonderful days in veterinary medicine, please don't misunderstand. There is so much fun. There there's so much good. We get to do such cool things. We get to meet some really interesting people, but there's also the shadow side of it. There's the part where it's challenging for us. There's the part where we take home with us the burdens of the day. We feel the emotional impact of the clients and of our coworkers, and then all of that together really builds and builds and builds. If we don't have the skills and tools in place to be able to create some separation for ourselves, then what tends to happen is we identify the most frustrating part of our lives with our jobs. We do this because we spend so much time in that environment.

It's very easy for us to find things about our jobs that we are unhappy with. Over time, what happens then as we identify the problems with the job, the challenges of the job, we can also then draw the conclusion that we didn't pick the right job. This is where career alignment really comes into play and job alignment. Understanding what is your own personal alignment score. So if you haven't had a

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chance to take our quiz, the Vet Med Career Alignment Score, just jump over to [joyfuldvm.com/quiz](https://joyfuldvm.com/quiz) to take that assessment and find out where you land.

Today, we're going to be talking about the second score. There are three buckets of scores that you'll land on based on your answers, and today we're going to talk about the second one. We talked about ACAF last week, which is Aligned Choice, Aligned Fit, and today we're going to talk about ACMF, which is Aligned Choice, Misaligned Fit. This is probably the most common result that I see with people coming through this quiz and it makes a lot of sense why. So let's kind of dig into that a little bit and understand what it means.

The aligned choice means, and I talked about this quite a bit last week in ACAF, but what that really means is that when you decided to go to veterinary school or to veterinary technician school, when you decided to pursue a career in veterinary medicine, no matter what your role is, that the reason that you chose to do it really made sense. It was really aligned with who you were. It was your choice. It was something you decided. Now, obviously, all of these choices to go ultimately became your decisions. But the decision for an AC choice or an aligned choice is a decision that was really what you wanted to do, like deeply what you wanted for yourself. It fits into that vision that you had for your own life. So that's the AC part of ACMF. The other part, misaligned fit, has to do with the job that we're in right now. For many of us, what we have is MF - Misaligned Fit. Now, does that mean you need to run out and quit your job? No, but we need to understand what it is that's creating that because if we don't understand the MF part of this alignment score, the misaligned fit part of this alignment score, then what happens is that we tend to draw the conclusion of our own that we just picked the wrong career altogether. We need to see that separation between the career and the current environment that we're working in first to really understand where we're going and also understand what has happened up until now.

Being discontent in our current job is really a gift to ourselves. I know that may sound a little bit strange, but it is through our clarity around the things that we are unhappy with that we are able to start to craft what it is that we want for ourselves in the future. So being an ACMF, so coming up with that score on a career alignment score isn't a problem. It isn't an indicator that you need to go out and quit the job that you're in right now. But what it is, it's an indicator that we need to understand what's happening right now so we can make decisions based on what we want instead of decisions based on what we don't want. This is a really, really important differentiation. What many of us do is we get into our jobs and we recognize over time that we're not happy. And then, as I said before, we spend a lot of time at our jobs, and so it makes a lot of sense that the reasons that we're not happy is maybe job-related and they likely are contributing. There are likely components of our jobs that are contributing to that a hundred percent. When we only blame the job for us being unhappy, then the solution becomes to quit the job.

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For any of you guys out there who have been job hoppers, and I'm going to raise my hand because this was absolutely me. If you just keep going from job to job to job, trying to find the one that makes you happy, what you realize over time is that that job doesn't exist. The conclusion most of us draw at that point after we tried several jobs and none of them has made us happy is that we've just picked the wrong career field. That going into veterinary medicine as a career was just the worst decision ever, and that we shouldn't have done it. So we're now going back and judging our prior decision. This score, when you're an ACMF, the first thing you want to do is interrupt that thought process and realize, "No, no. I made the right choice at the time." So you made the best choice that you could with the information resources you had available and that choice to go into veterinary medicine as a career field was an absolute, perfect choice for you. So let's not go back and beat ourselves up over that. But let's really get curious about what's happening right now because how is it possible that you have an aligned career choice, but you have a misaligned fit? Well, there's a lot of reasons why that's possible.

First off, let's just think about all the variety of things that we can do with this job. Not all of us are cut out to be in clinical practice, day in and day out in general practice. Not all of us are cut out to do surgery. Not all of us are cut out to work medical cases. When I say, 'not cut out for' I'm not saying you're not capable of it. That's not at all what I'm saying. But what I'm saying is part of your own personal journey, your mission, your life purpose is probably not those tasks associated with this job. This job isn't just done in one way. There are a million different things that we can do with these degrees. It's not until we do a little bit of experimenting, we try it out in different environments and in different roles that we're able to really create that clarity for ourselves on how it is that we are meant to serve through a veterinary background in the world. That's going to be very, very different for us. If we box ourselves into being clinical practitioners or support staff in clinical practice, and that doesn't light us up and that doesn't make us happy, then what many, many of us do is we conclude we picked the wrong career and we turn all that inward on ourselves because there's also consequences of those career choices. Many of us have student loan debt. We feel very buried and trapped by that student loan debt and forced to continue in this career that we've chosen and even in this job that we've chosen. If we can start to recognize that there's actually an opportunity in our dissatisfaction and become curious about why we aren't happy there, then we can start to see the other things that are available for us to do with this background and experience that we have. As I already said, there's a lot of different things out there for us. So when it comes to being a misaligned fit, we want to use the components that we're unhappy with as those jumping-off part points to understand what it is that we actually do want. We actually are gathering very valuable data through that.

Another thing with this misaligned fit is as we go through and we start to identify what we're not happy with, what we don't like about our current jobs, we can also start to then differentiate those different things. So maybe what you don't like has to do with the personalities of the people that

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you're working with. Maybe what you don't like has to do with the hours that you work. Maybe what you don't like is the amount of money that you make. Maybe what you don't like is how many days a week you have to do surgery. Maybe what you don't like is interacting with clients. As you start to do this, you notice those are all very, very different things and so the approach to solving for those things or feeling better in relation to those things really becomes dependent on them. We have to look at how we interact in each of those areas and what our expectations are and what we want in each of those areas before we can take the entire job and just chuck it as not a good fit and not right for us. We have to do that work. If we don't, if we don't slow this down to understand exactly why we don't like the job that we're in, then what's going to happen is we're going to make a broad sweeping conclusion that it's just a bad place to work and we'll start searching for another job. As soon as we find one that we think looks better, and honestly when we get to that point that we've decided that the one that we're in is not good, almost any other job is going to look better. So we're already kind of predisposed to finding a job that seems better because we are so focused on getting away from the one that we're currently in. So we find this job that seems like it's better, but if we haven't cleaned up the components of the reason why we were unhappy in the first job, what happens is we jumped to the next job, it feels better for a while, and then all of the same types of things start coming up again. The things, the components, the individual reasons why the previous job didn't make you happy, you're going to start to identify those same reasons here. It makes perfect sense because we haven't actually addressed the problem. We've just run away from it. Anytime we go from a job that we were unhappy with to the potential of a job that we will be happy in, then we are going to feel better for a little while. That happens just because we're thinking different things. As you go into any new job, especially when you're leaving one that you've been unhappy with, you are already thinking all the positive thoughts about the new experience; about how much better this is going to be because you're not going to be there anymore. That You're going to be able to get away from there. As you've interviewed, and as you've taken a look at this new place that you're going to, you found good things about it that you liked. So you're thinking about all the things that you like - maybe you have a different schedule; maybe you're making a different amount of money; maybe they have different equipment; maybe you aren't going to be doing surgery. Whatever the things are that you've been able to negotiate, you're thinking about those things which absolutely creates a more positive experience for you. But if we haven't really understood or taken the time to understand the reasons why we were unhappy in the old job, other than just blaming certain people or certain things, there is a difference there. We can identify them, but let's not blame them. Let's understand why we had a negative emotional reaction in those situations. If we don't do that work, slow it down to understand it at that level, then it's just going to repeat itself. If it repeats itself time and time again then that's where we get to the conclusion that we've just picked the wrong career altogether. I just want you to know that that's almost never true. Almost never true. Even when we talk about next week, our final category of scores here in this Vet Med Career Alignment Score, which is MCMF - Misaligned Choice, Misaligned Fit - we'll talk about that next week, you're going to see how there really isn't a situation in which we picked the wrong career field. We really didn't. I promise you this. As you start to

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understand how it weaves into your story and how it's an intentional part of the reason that you're here and what you're here to do in this world, then you can start to see and give yourself maybe a little bit of permission and grace and forgiveness over that judgment that many of us hold when we've gone from job to job to job and we just haven't been able to find the one that fits for us.

Misaligned fit comes with a lot of opportunities. It comes with an opportunity for you to dig in and really understand all the components of why it is you're unhappy where you are. Once you've done that, you have the framework then to understand what it is that you want.

For many of us, just starting out saying, okay, what do you want in a job is a hard, hard question to answer. It's a hard question in general. What do you want for your life? What do you want? Anything that comes after that, what do you want? For many, many of us, especially when we're service-based people where we are very compassionate driven, and we do care about other people, and we want to contribute, if somebody asks us what we want, many of us automatically feel selfish. We automatically feel uncomfortable because we haven't really ever looked at our lives through the lens of what we want. It's kind of interesting because it seems like our world is somewhat conditioned for us to not even consider what we want. To be so focused on giving and doing that we miss the part where we're supposed to actually decide what we want before we give and do. When it all fits together; when what you want is aligned with the way that you give and the things that you do, then life becomes really interesting and fun and much, much less stressful. Without that alignment, without spending our time focused on the things that are important to us, taking actions that contribute to the things that we're trying to create in the world to the way that we're trying to make a difference. If we're not aligned in that and we're just going through the motions, doing the actions from some other belief, obligations, hyper sense of responsibility, something like that, it's very difficult to find any job that can fit those buckets; that can actually meet that need. When we step back away from it and we just allow ourselves the permission to say, "Okay. Yeah, this one, isn't great. I'm not really happy here, but let me understand why", without jumping straight to the point in the fingers and accusing of all the things that are going wrong in the current environment. I know there's plenty of things going wrong. I absolutely not discounting that, but I don't want you to get so caught up in the finger-pointing and in the blaming of what's wrong with where you're at, that you miss how that influences you individually and understanding why those things that you're identifying are a problem for you.

The things that we identify as problems for us aren't problems for everybody else. That's why we have to understand from an individual level what it is that is so out of alignment for us in a current job. It starts with an understanding of what you don't want and then taking that answer a step further to see then what's the other side of it. What is it that you do want? What's the contrast? Identifying then your list of the things that you want and how you want that to fit into the life that you're creating allows you to pursue the next opportunity through that lens of moving forward. If we don't do it this

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way, then the only thing that happens is we keep running away from bad situations which tends to land us in more bad situations. The entire thing actually changes when we just shift our perspective a little bit and start searching for what we are interested in and what's aligned with what we want to create for ourselves. Being aligned with our values and our morals and our ethics and the way we want to spend our time and the type of people that we want to be around and the way that we want to serve. When we pursue our next job with those things in mind, then it's much more likely to actually be what we're looking for. When we pursue it as a means of running away from where we are right now because we have identified that that's just not a great place, but we haven't actually put any clarity around that, that's how we just keep repeating that pattern.

So for those of us who fall into Vet Med Career Alignment Score ACMF, here's what I want you to know. Your choice to go into veterinary medicine was solid. It was not a wrong choice. It was a great choice. The only thing that's happening is that you haven't found that sweet spot yet on how to use your skills and knowledge and that sweet spot changes over time, my friends. It's very, very normal for us to get in, to do something for several years, and then to start to feel restless and start to feel that we want to contribute in a different way. That's totally normal. That doesn't mean there's something wrong with you. We are an ever-evolving species. We're supposed to grow. We're supposed to learn throughout an entire lifetime. That does involve, for quite a few of us, shifting around what we do from a career perspective, as we gain more experience and more knowledge and go through the day in, day out, in a career for a period of time. So don't be surprised if that changes.

Also, don't buy into the idea that the only reason to ever leave a job, to ever change your circumstance here is because you're unhappy. That's what most of us do. We run away from things we're unhappy with, but it's much more challenging and requires much more courage for us to intentionally leave a situation that may be providing for us just fine; that may be actually an enjoyable experience because we know that it's not going to help equip us to move forward toward the bigger things that we want for ourselves. That is another way that ACMF pops up for us is that a career alignment score is when the job itself that we're currently in, doesn't actually add to or move us further along the path toward the overall purpose and what it is that we're ultimately trying to create. If we haven't ever taken the time to ever consider that, which many of us haven't; if we haven't taken the time to consider what it is that we want for our lives, what we're trying to create beyond that first goal of getting through our veterinary education, then we will be left very frustrated and a little bit lost, a little bit disheartened because it just shows us that we've probably put a lot of the responsibility for our overall wellbeing on the jobs that we do. What I want you to understand is that your value and worth are not tied to your job. That what's possible for you is greater than your current experience. That you may not have yet even begun to tap into the possibilities of the life that you can have simply because you've been so busy doing and doing and doing, and just trying to keep your head above water that you haven't even considered what you want. That is a critical part for anybody

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that falls into ACMF alignment on the career alignment score is to understand what it is that you want.

My friends, if you haven't taken the quiz yet, jump over to [joyfuldvm.com/quiz](https://joyfuldvm.com/quiz). Take the Vet Med Career Alignment Score. Find out which of the three buckets that you land into. Keep an eye out next week. We're going to be talking about the Career Alignment bucket MCMF, and what that one entails as well. When you take the quiz, you're going to get a multi-page PDF. We're just really skimming the surface here when I'm going through these, one by one, over these last few weeks. So we're skimming the surface and trying to grab maybe the most important point out of each one, but there's a multi-page PDF report that comes with every one of those scores. So grab that because inside there, not only is it going to outline the challenges that anybody in those particular buckets experiences, which will help you really understand that you're so normal, by the way. So really kind of understanding that what you're experiencing is pretty typical, depending on what score that you land in. But it's also going to show you your opportunities in much more detail than what we were able to do here. So it will give you your opportunities as well as those challenges that will help you move forward.

The goal with all of this, the whole purpose behind understanding your own career alignment score is the alignment piece because your career is only one component of your life and your life is important. Your life has a purpose. You are here intentionally for a reason, and what you do, how you spend your time is really, really important for that overall big picture. What's happened to so many of us in this career field as we've gotten into it and we've been so busy serving in the veterinary profession that we are missing out on our entire lives. This will help you to see why, and it will also help you to start opening the door, to take back control, to take back the power, to take back that intentional decision so that you can build a career and find the job that's aligned with your entire life purpose. So your entire life expands through it, and you're not waiting to live your life until you're finished with work at the end of each day.

All right, my friends, that's going to wrap it up for this week. I look forward to talking to you guys next time about the career alignment score MCMF. Have a great rest of the week and I'll see you soon. Bye for now.

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](https://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.