

# Veterinary Medicine A Job? A Career? A Calling?

Reframing Our view of Veterinary Work  
H. Howells, DVM

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Now, an introduction: Who am I?



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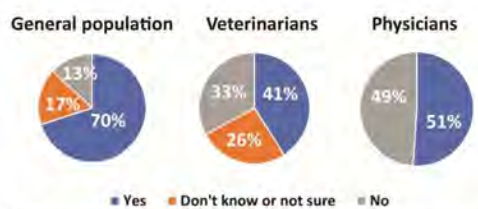
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Vet Med: NOT recommended by most



**Figure 10**—Percentages of respondents who would or would not recommend their current career to a friend or family member for employed adults in the general US populations, veterinarians who responded to the MAH Study, and physicians who responded to a similar question\* (physician respondents were not given a "don't know, not sure" option).

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### What is a "calling", anyway?

**From the Miriam-Webster Dictionary:**

**calling**  
noun  
call-ing | \ 'kô-lîŋ \

**Definition of calling**

- 1: a strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action especially when accompanied by conviction of divine influence
- 2: the vocation or profession in which one customarily engages
- 3: the characteristic cry of a female cat in heat



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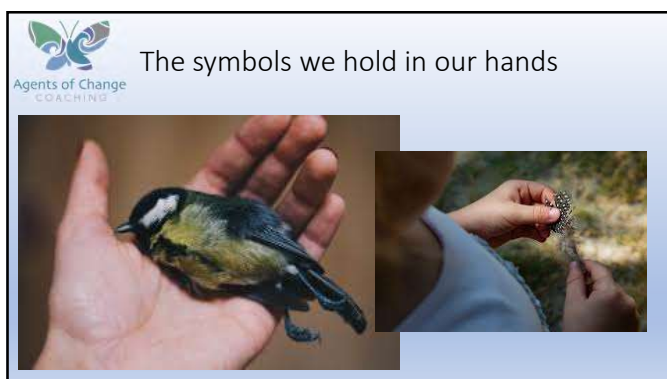
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## All things change with time . . .




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## . . . what is shame, anyway?





Shame is . . .

The intensely painful feeling that we are unworthy of love and belonging.

The most primitive human emotion we all feel – and the one no one wants to talk about. The less we talk about it, the more power it has.

The difference between guilt and shame is the difference between “I did something bad”, and . . . “I AM bad.”

— Brene Brown

“What we don't need in the midst of struggle is shame for being human.”

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## I was SO RELIEVED.



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**Agents of Change COACHING**

**I'm like a flea . . .**

People say if you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life — but CEOs and experts caution that could be dangerous advice

**The Call of the Wild: Zookeepers, Callings, and the Double-edged Sword of Deeply Meaningful Work**

J. Stuart Bunderson  
Marquette University  
St. Louis  
Jeffery A. Thompson  
Baylor University

**Work as a Calling: A Theoretical Model**

Robert D. Joffe  
University of Illinois

**The risk of thinking of your job as a higher calling**

By David G. Myers

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**Agents of Change COACHING**

**2009 – Administrative Science**

*"But whereas the recent research discussed above has almost exclusively emphasized the positive implications of calling (e.g. meaning and purpose), our interviews with zookeepers suggested that the benefits of a calling do not come without costs . . . fostering a sense of . . . unbending duty, personal sacrifice, and heightened vigilance . . ."*

**The Call of the Wild: Zookeepers, Callings, and the Double-edged Sword of Deeply Meaningful Work**

J. Stuart Bunderson  
Marquette University  
St. Louis  
Jeffery A. Thompson  
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**Work as a Calling: A Theoretical Model**

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**Agents of Change COACHING**

**2018 – Journal of Counseling Psychology**

Viewing work as a calling can lead to . . .

**Work as a Calling: A Theoretical Model**

Robert D. Joffe  
University of Illinois

**Positive Outcomes:**

- job satisfaction
- increased performance

**Negative Outcomes:**

- Workaholism
- "simply, an addiction to work"
- Burnout
- "a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job"
- Organizational Exploitation
- "when your performance isn't compensated because your intrinsic motivation is supposed to be enough"

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 Nov. 2018 – Business Insider

People say if you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life — but CEOs and experts caution that could be dangerous advice

*Shane Loomis*  
Nov 7, 2018 9:38 AM (Updated 11/7/18)



References Amy Wrzesniewski's research on job-crafting, or, molding your job to be more meaningful to you: *"If you see your job as a calling, you're inclined to see your life and work as linked inextricably, and you're motivated by a sense of purpose and mission (as opposed to financial rewards)."*

*"Feeling passion for and deriving meaning from your work is often seen as a good thing. But in 'The Job,' Ellen Ruppel Shell explains how that can backfire. . . . If you lose your job, you might also feel like you've lost your identity. What's more, employers might be inclined to take advantage of your devotion to work."*

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 Jan 2019 – Quartz.com

*Quartz.com: (Quartz & Co.)*

**The risk of thinking of your job as a higher calling**  
by Lisa Brinkman • January 16, 2019

In a memo announcing that Tesla will lay off 3,000 workers, or 7% of its employees, CEO Elon Musk outlined his reasoning, explaining the daunting financial pressures the company faces in its quest to build an affordable electric car.

The memo also included a noteworthy emotional appeal. Musk essentially asked employees—those who have already invested a lot of time and money and will stay on to survive more of the same—to remember Tesla's mission. Singing from details about the company's financial picture to the news of the layoffs, Musk writes:

*There are many companies that can offer a better work-life balance, because they are larger and more mature or in industries that are not so intensely competitive. Attempting to build affordable clean energy products at scale necessarily requires extreme effort and relentless creativity, but succeeding in our mission is essential to ensure that the future is good, so we must do everything we can to advance the cause.*

Musk often references his ambitious plans to save humanity, whether via Tesla or his space-faring SpaceX. Still, as CEO managing over, this attempt to rally the remaining troops and push them to their limits work-wise is suspect. And

*"People who work in jobs that serve a moral purpose . . . are typically under-resourced and overworked, mainly, Ballard says, because of the MYTH that people who heed a higher calling—including teaching or nursing—can somehow be satisfied with the knowledge that they're improving the world. This idealized view that connects our noblest work to poverty 'comes from the priesthood', she says, 'and can be used as a way to get people to downplay practical needs and concerns,' like SLEEPING and EATING."*

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Agents of Change COACHING

"Just a job" ... ???

Not just a job, a rewarding career

not just a job, it's LOVE

DOES JUST ENOUGH TO KEEP THEIR JOB WHILE CHANGING THEIR MINDS OF ALL OR RIGHT AT WORK. A "TEAM PLAYER" WORKS POSITIVELY TOGETHER WITH PARTNERS TO SEE THE JOB DONE THE BEST WAY POSSIBLE. SEE THE DIFFERENCE?

CHOOSE A JOB you love & YOU WILL NEVER HAVE TO WORK

You're killing yourself for a job that would replace you within a week if you dropped dead. Take care of yourself.

A job isn't just a job. It's who you are.

It's just a job. Grass grows, birds fly, waves pound the sand. I beat people up. Muhammad Ali

IT'S NOT JUST A JOB IT'S A CALLING

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When I flipped burgers . .



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So, can we agree to drop the stigma?

It's.... **JUST A JOB!!!**

- Meaning
- Importance
- Satisfaction
- Performance
- Achievement
- Enjoyment
- Impact

KEEP CALM IT'S JUST A JOB

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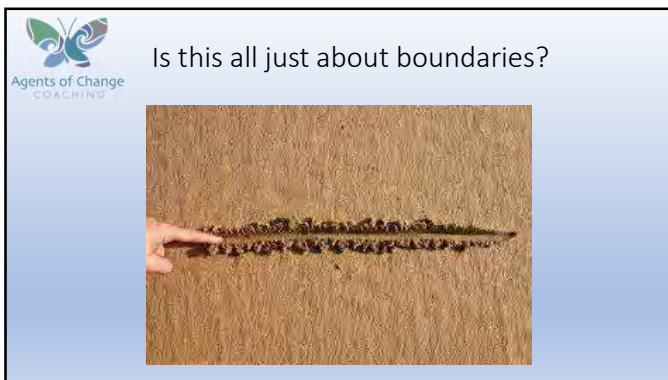
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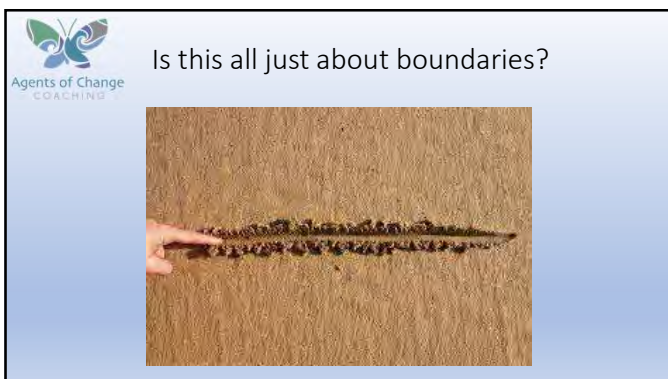
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Agents of Change  
COACHING

### Reduction in the "Halo Effect"



We're not worthy! We're not worthy!

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Agents of Change  
COACHING

### Better ability to advocate for yourself

*"I love what I do, but this is not a hobby for me."*

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Agents of Change  
COACHING

### And for those who ARE employers . . .

From Duffy et al., "Work as a Calling: A Theoretical Model," Journal of Counseling Psychology, 2018:

**Organizational Support** is the "level of provision, care, assistance, and encouragement that employees experience within their work environment . . . [which are] attributable to the organization."



More organizational support leads to:

- Increased job satisfaction
- More meaning at work
- Higher organizational commitment
- Better performance

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 **Finally . . . Job Crafting**

Look no further than:  
Amy Wrzesniewski, PhD

Professor of Organizational Behavior  
Yale School of Management  
Yale University

Has researched and written about  
Job Crafting since 2001

. . . Promotes “fit, satisfaction,  
meaning, engagement, and  
commitment” at work!



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 **The Individual and the Organization**




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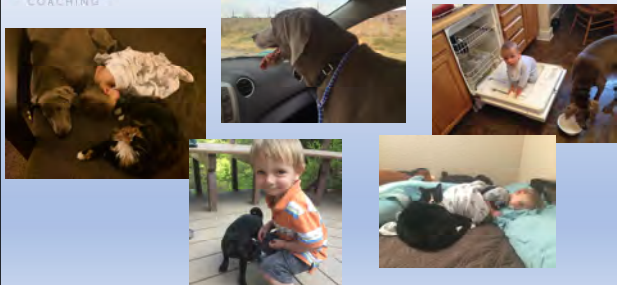
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 **Driving it all home . . .**



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