

# Book Club Discussion Questions for "A Compassionate Calling: What It Really Means To Be a Veterinarian" By Dr. Marie Holowaychuk (For Pet Owners)

## Section 1: Journey of a Veterinary Critical Care Specialist

- What surprised you most about the personal and professional journey veterinarians take to become experts in their field?
- How did learning about the demands of veterinary training and residency impact your appreciation for your veterinarian's expertise?
- How do you think early experiences and challenges shape a vet's approach to caring for animals?
- What surprised you most about the journey veterinarians take to become specialists?
- How does knowing more about their intense training change your view of your vet's expertise?

## Sections 2 & 3: Veterinary Medicine Realities and Understanding the Profession

### Veterinary Education and Debt

- Did you know about the financial burdens veterinarians face? How does that influence your expectations around costs and care?

### Ethical Dilemmas and Euthanasia

- What feelings came up as you read about veterinarians navigating difficult decisions like euthanasia? How would you want your veterinarian to communicate during these moments?

### Client Communication and Incivility

- What experiences have you had with client-vet communication?
- How might understanding your veterinarian's perspectives change how you approach difficult conversations?

### Mental Health, Burnout, and Compassion Fatigue

- What new insights did you gain about the mental health challenges veterinarians face?
- How can pet owners support the emotional wellbeing of their veterinary care teams?

### Handling Mistakes in Veterinary Care

- How do you feel when you hear that veterinarians sometimes make mistakes?
- What do you think is the best way veterinarians should handle mistakes?

## Section 4: The Future of Veterinary Medicine

### Technology and Telemedicine

- How comfortable would you feel using telemedicine for your pet's health concerns?
- In what situations do you think virtual visits could be helpful or problematic?

### Veterinary Corporatization

- Have you noticed changes in veterinary care due to larger corporate-owned practices?
- What concerns or benefits do you see with corporatization in veterinary medicine?
- How might corporatization affect your relationship with your veterinarian or the care your pet receives?

### Pet Health Insurance

- How familiar are you with pet health insurance, and how do you think it influences treatment options?
- What role should insurance play in making veterinary care accessible and equitable?

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Veterinary Medicine

- Why do you think diversity and inclusion matter in veterinary care teams?
- How could a more diverse veterinary workforce benefit pets and their owners?

### Veterinary Technicians and Unsung Heroes

- What do you know about the roles of veterinary technicians and other support staff?
- How can pet owners better recognize and appreciate these "unsung heroes" in veterinary medicine?

### Workforce Crisis and Team Wellbeing

- How might clients contribute to creating a more positive, sustainable environment for veterinary teams?
- What would a compassionate and respectful vet-client relationship look like to you moving forward?

### Final Reflective Questions

- How has this book changed your understanding of what it takes to be a veterinarian?
- Has it shifted how you view your veterinarian's role in your pet's care and wellbeing?
- What is one thing you might do differently during your next veterinary visit based on what you've learned?
- How can you foster a better partnership with your veterinarian for the benefit of your pet's health and their wellbeing?

