



Connection And Synergy Presents:

Beyond the Exam Room:
Burnout, Boundaries, and
the Quiet Power of Human
Connection in Veterinary
Medicine

**A Presentation
By Susan Bloom,
Master Equine Gestaltist,
Healthcare Relationship
Advocate, and Storyteller**

- Burnout in veterinary medicine is often rooted in moral distress—not a lack of resilience.
- Clear, compassionate communication reduces conflict and emotional labor—for both veterinarians and clients.
- You don't have to be superhuman to be trusted.



Connection
and Synergy™

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Program Overview

Veterinary medicine lives at the intersection of love, loss, science, and humanity. Veterinarians are asked to be highly skilled clinicians, compassionate guides through grief, business owners, and emotional anchors—often all in the same appointment.

In this talk, Susan Bloom draws from a lifetime of caring for animals, personal experiences in veterinary exam rooms, years as a caregiver, and her work in relational and equine-assisted healing. Through story, reflection, and practical insight, she invites veterinarians to step beyond the role of “superhuman” and reconnect with what sustains them—clear communication, healthy boundaries, and genuine human connection.

This is not a lecture about doing more. It is a conversation about carrying less—without caring less.



Key Learning Points

Participants will:

- Understand the difference between burnout, compassion fatigue, and moral distress—and why mislabeling them makes healing harder.
- Learn how small, human moments can de-escalate emotional situations for both clients and clinicians.
- Gain language for navigating end-of-life and high-stakes decisions without defensiveness or emotional withdrawal.
- Explore how appropriate vulnerability builds trust rather than eroding professionalism.
- Identify inherited beliefs about duty, availability, and self-sacrifice that quietly contribute to burnout.

Signature Moments in the Talk

Here are a few moments I share in the talk that serve as “anchor stories” and invite deep reflection and engagement:

- **The Dairy King Moment**
A story of a veterinarian’s small act of kindness during a devastating loss—and how those moments regulate nervous systems on both sides of the exam room.
- **When Knowing More Isn’t the Answer**
A powerful comparison between two euthanasia conversations—one rooted in control, one in trust—and what that teaches us about moral distress.
- **The Superhuman Myth**
Reflections on veterinarians who said “I won’t work myself to death”—and those who did—and the hidden cost of being seen as invulnerable.
- **Heart Horses and Soul Dogs**
Naming the unspoken grief veterinarians carry from the animals—and people—they never forget.

Why This Talk Matters

Veterinary medicine asks professionals to hold an extraordinary amount of responsibility—clinical expertise, emotional presence, ethical decision-making, business realities, and client grief—often all at once. Yet many veterinarians were trained extensively in medicine and minimally in how to navigate the human moments that define their hardest days.

Burnout in this profession is rarely about a lack of dedication or resilience. More often, it stems from moral distress, unresolved grief, and the pressure to be constantly available, unflappable, and right. When these experiences remain unspoken, they quietly erode well-being, communication, and connection—with clients, colleagues, and loved ones.

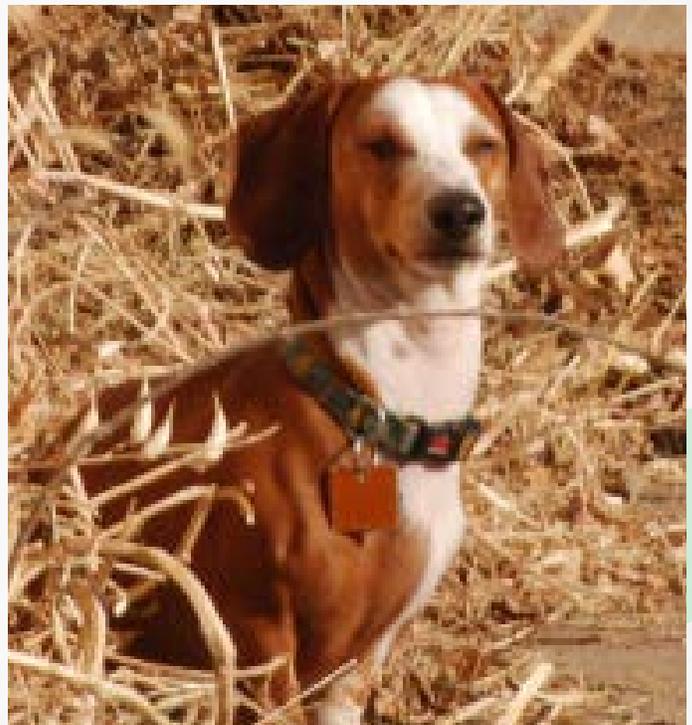
This talk creates space to name what is usually carried alone. Through lived experience and practical insight, it helps veterinarians recognize how small moments of humanity can reduce emotional intensity, improve trust, and make difficult conversations more sustainable. It reframes communication not as another task to master, but as a relational skill that protects both the caregiver and the care receiver.

At a time when veterinary professionals are leaving the field at alarming rates, this work matters because sustainable care requires sustainable caregivers. When veterinarians are supported in being human—not superhuman—they are better equipped to serve their clients, their patients, and themselves for the long haul.



5 Reasons This Work Lights Me Up

- I have sat on both sides of the exam room—with animals I loved deeply and decisions that broke my heart.
- I understand grief that doesn't have clean edges or quick resolutions.
- I've watched caregiving take a toll on people I love—and learned what helps and what harms.
- I believe sustainable care begins with honoring the caregiver, not erasing them.
- I am deeply committed to helping veterinarians stay connected to why they chose this work in the first place—without sacrificing themselves.



About Susan Bloom

Master Equine Gestaltist | Healthcare Relationship Advocate | Storyteller

Susan Bloom is a lifelong horsewoman, speaker, and Master Equine Gestaltist® whose work focuses on communication, connection, and emotional sustainability in caregiving professions, including veterinary medicine.

Raised in rural western Kansas as the daughter of the only physician in her county, Susan witnessed early the privilege—and cost—of being the one others rely on. She has spent a lifetime in veterinary exam rooms as a client and caregiver, navigating loss, uncertainty, and end-of-life decisions with animals she deeply loved.



Susan is trained in the Equine Gestalt Coaching Method® (EGCM), a four-year intensive program that blends experiential coaching with the emotional attunement of horses. As an Equine Assisted PlayShop facilitator, she designs interactive, horse-guided experiences that foster self-awareness, communication, and trust for healthcare professionals, caregivers, and teams.

A breast cancer survivor and longtime caregiver to both humans and animals, Susan brings lived experience, a B.A. in Communications, and a grounded storytelling approach to her work. Today, she partners with veterinarians, doctors, and caregivers to create spaces where sustainable care—and honest human connection—can take root.

Contact

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