



Veterinary Woman Role Model Profile

Lindsay Davies



"Arm yourself with independent life skills at every opportunity. A great team, whether it's work, family, or friends, is made up of individuals who are always learning and supporting each other to do so."

DESCRIBE YOUR TYPICAL DAY:

I am quite a routine person, so honestly my day is pretty boring. Boyfriend drags me out of bed with a promise of coffee and cornflakes. I battle the morning rush hour of woodlice in my rural cottage. Most days win the battle with my trusty dustpan and brush and have a victory shower. Open the patio doors and sit down at my desk. Sit at my desk chipping away at my never ending to do list. Netflix. Dinner. Bed.

My current to do list encompasses tasks which come with running the @theeccrvn, Veterinary Webinurse, the VetsNow ECC certificate and a research project on the use of rectal catheters. I am almost disappointed with how tiny this list sounds!

My actual job is a bit different. Full time I am an emergency and critical care veterinary nurse at the Royal Veterinary College. These days look slightly different to the idyllic days at my desk. These days are more hop over the woodlice rush hour, quick shower, hair up, uniform on, into actual rush hour for an 8am start of 12.5 hours in the largest and most heavily equipped veterinary emergency department in the UK.

I really love and enjoy both sides of my working days. At the RVC, I either spend my shift in the intensive care unit (ICU) or in the emergency room (ER). ICU shifts see me nursing some of the sickest patients in the country, working with THE most incredible team you could ask for. In ER I will have "first opinion" patients to look after, but the primary task in this role is to assist with incoming emergencies: by triaging, instrumenting, and assisting to stabilise them. Once admitted, instrumented and immediate emergency treatment has been performed most patients will then be whisked off by team anaesthesia or moved to ICU for more intense, on-going care.

CAREER SO FAR:

I grew up in very rural Wales. The making of me started when I moved in with my single father as a teenager. In hindsight, a terrible decision by little 11-year-old me. I scraped through school battling with a not very pleasant (well, horrible) home life and came out with 4 Cs and above at GCSE. Shortly after getting my GCSE results, my wonderful father kicked me out and I found myself homeless at 16.

A friend and I “squatted” a house together on the local council estate for a while, but thanks to the charity Shelter I managed to get a room in a homeless hostel and a few months later my own flat. Obviously, I failed my A levels miserably while this was all happening and felt a bit lost as a result.

I had no idea what to do with myself and felt like a failure. One day, I just thought, well I like animals, I will do an animal management course at the local college and hope that opens a door or two. As part of the course you are required to do work experience and not having a car or money for transport my only option was the local vets. Well, I was there 2 weeks and they offered me a VN training position. This was an AMAZING opportunity, but naturally Imposter syndrome kicked in and I just told them I would like to do some more work experience and would think about it. I could not believe a chance of an actual career was offered to me and I am still so grateful for this, every damn day of my life.

After doing a year’s worth of work experience with them, I decided that I was capable and accepted the opportunity. I went on to re-do my English, maths and science GCSEs while doing my nursing diploma and bumped them all up to Bs. A year after qualifying as a veterinary nurse I was accepted into Nottingham Veterinary School too, but had started working at the Royal Veterinary College as an emergency and critical care (ECC) nurse when I received my vet school offer and actually turned it down. Being an ECC RVN is definitely my calling - sorry vet school!

Following qualifying I wanted to do bigger, better things, with crazier equipment and scarier emergencies. Just 9 months qualified I landed myself a job in the ECC department at the RVC and moved 200 miles from home on my own, even left my poor boyfriend behind! It took a good 12 months for me to feel like I had found my feet at the RVC, there was SO much to learn. I really love teaching too and once I had found my feet thought “well, there’s nothing I do here that I could not teach any other RVN to do”. With this thought I started to look at how to best do this, firstly, I started an Instagram (@TheECCRVN) to see if people liked what and how I taught.

Following setting this up I realised there were hundreds of RVNs like me, trying to be heard, to teach and learn and all sharing their knowledge freely on Instagram. I love this SO much, and will always continue to do this myself, but this is not recognised CPD, not topping up any wages and the opportunities to be heard are still limited. As a result, I decided to set up Veterinary Webinurse. A platform where any qualified veterinary professional can upload teaching content, have it peer-reviewed for accuracy AND make a career out of selling their knowledge through the platform. On the flip side of this it provides veterinary professionals around the world a truly diverse and personal continuous professional development and learning opportunities. Now, I just have to find the time to make my own webinars!



DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN A SENTENCE:

I struggle to condense anything into one sentence, so I asked my mother, my sister, and my best friend. See results below.

HOW WOULD OTHERS DESCRIBE YOU:

My mother: "A bright and sunny individual, with a kind soul".

My sister: "Arsey Face, just kidding, an intelligent, kind, selfless and beautiful human being"

My best friend: "Being friends with Lindsay is how I'd imagine birth, it's painful, but you'd do it again and the product is beautiful."

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR TOP SUCCESS AND WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THIS?

Landing a job at the RVC after only being qualified for 9 months.

"The only thing standing in your way, is yourself"

"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take."

Also, launching Veterinary Webinurse - ask me this question again in 2 years!

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE, SETBACK OR FAILURE AND HOW HAVE YOU OVERCOME IT? HOW DID YOU GROW OR CHANGE AS A RESULT?

I have had nothing, am I afraid of having nothing again? Absolutely, and I work hard to never be in that situation. Most of us are only one missed pay slip away from this reality. I was homeless at 16 and by seeking the right help, managed to pull myself out of it, wangle my way on to an animal management course after the application deadline date. Then, landed a VN training role in a local practice. I think it is easier to do something when you HAVE to. Starting with nothing has really made me push endlessly to achieve some form of measurable success.

WHAT COMPROMISES HAVE YOU HAD TO MAKE AND WHAT, IF ANYTHING, COULD HAVE HELPED?

When I got my job at the RVC, I needed to move 200 miles from home into a much smaller house. Due to unfortunate circumstances (and at the last minute) the foster home I had lined up for my cat fell through and I had to make the decision on not leaving or rehoming her. A very close friend of mine took her on for me. This broke my heart and, honestly, was the most difficult decision I ever had to make. Following an odd series of events, my cat was returned to me. 2 years after moving away my boyfriend and cat joined me! Like with anyone, it would have helped to have had a real support network early in life. Unfortunately these things are out of our control, so, I created my own. I have the most amazing friends and boyfriend and I would be lost without them.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU HAVE GIVEN TO YOUR YOUNGER SELF, THAT YOU WOULD NOW GIVE TO OTHERS WANTING TO FOLLOW YOUR PATH?

“The only person you can truly rely on is yourself” - As harsh as it sounds it is true. This is a bit of advice my stepfather gave me, that got me through a lot of tough emotional, personal, and professional struggles. I thoroughly encourage everyone to ask for help when they need it and I spend most of my time happily helping and mentoring others. When you ask for help, though, I believe you should be asking to learn how to fix or solve the problem yourself. Arm yourself with independent life skills at every opportunity. A great team, whether its work, family, or friends, is made up of individuals who are always learning and supporting each other to do so.

I COULDN'T HAVE GOT WHERE I AM TODAY WITHOUT...

The unfathomable patience of my partner. He has been there through everything and his love and support for me and my “quirks” has never faltered.

What are your three top likes?

1. People, I'm a very “people-y person”
2. Working on projects and brainstorming ideas
3. Cher

What are your three top dislikes?

1. An ungrateful attitude
2. Slow technology
3. The ever-growing space between the rich and poor, and the resulting poverty.

WHAT IS THE MOST HELPFUL BOOK YOU'VE READ AND WHY?

The 4 agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom. The 4 agreements are: Be impeccable with your word, don't take anything personally, don't make assumptions and always do your best. Which all takes a lot of practice and they are skills none of us will ever be perfect at, but it's an excellent start.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER RESOURCES YOU'D RECOMMEND (BLOGS, WEBSITES, TED TALKS, COURSES ETC)?

This Ted Talk changed my life:

https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_may_shape_who_you_are/discussion#t-590834”.

The Veterinary/Veterinary nursing community on Instagram. Learning how to “bullet journal”. Honestly, everything that's not Vet Nursing related I teach myself from Youtube and random tech blogs.



Many thanks to Lindsay for sharing her story to **inspire** veterinary women to **aspire** and **grow** into their full career potential.

If you would like to share your story please get in touch at info@veterinarywoman.co.uk

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