

Indigo Trails

Stacey Bean offers healing with a horse sense

BY EMILY LEAS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY KAIA CALHOUN

Dark red barns ramble across the property at Indigo Trails, set against a backdrop of rolling hills. A gentle breeze carries the sound of a horse neighing from a nearby pasture, while Kabuki, an English retriever, lounges in the sun on the cool concrete. Stacey Bean settles in to share the story of founding Indigo Trails, a holistic wellness center, and of her own journey of grief and self-discovery.

Bean knows she's always been a healer. Even before she went to medical school to become an emergency medicine doctor, she loved educating and inspiring others to lead their best lives through health and wellness. In her first year of med school at the University of Vermont, she met her match in Darren Bean. They married and moved to Madison to start their careers in the emergency room—he at UW Hospital and she at St. Mary's Hospital.

"Through medical school and beyond, we were known as Dr. He Bean and Dr. She Bean," she remembers, smiling. "People would call and ask for Dr. Bean

and we'd say which one...the He Bean or the She Bean. Then there'd be a silence and then laughter."

But through their 10 years in medicine, Bean recalls a sense of something missing—something about Western medicine that just didn't make her feel complete. And then on Mother's Day of 2008, Bean got the call that changed her journey.

"I didn't realize that my last day of medicine was the day before" the call, she says.

Darren's Med Flight helicopter went down near La Crosse, leaving Bean with two small children and a lifetime ahead of her without her soulmate.

"Life stopped for me...The idea of going back to emergency medicine without him...it had always been Dr. He Bean and Dr. She Bean," she says with tears in her eyes.

She decided that when the time felt right, she would go back. But that time never came. She went on her own healing journey over the next five years, peeling back the layers of grief through meditation, exploring Eastern medicine techniques that had always interested her, and, as she says, getting back into her own truth.

"Some people say that I reinvented myself. No, I found myself," she says with a hand to her heart.

As part of that healing journey, horses re-entered Bean's life. Having grown up with them, Bean thought at the time in 2012 that horses would be entertainment

for her young family. The horses let her know that wasn't going to be the case. She explains that they solidified for her how to be in the present, how to be vulnerable. She found that her grief and pain didn't bother them, it didn't scare them, they didn't try to fix it.

As Abbie Franke, one of Bean's closest friends, explains, "Her philosophy is about living each day to the fullest and that each day is a choice. Not to live in the past, not to live in the future, but to live awake, alert and aware in the present."

This philosophy propelled Bean through the next part of her journey. After purchasing two horses, she found the Verona property and knew that the serenity of the place could help awaken and heal others. She also knew from her journey following Darren's accident that while her decade practicing medicine gave her expertise in the physical body, healing needed to focus on the emotional, spiritual and nutritional aspects as well—the whole body.

So, she spent the next four years gaining expertise in these other pillars and began building Indigo Trails, which offers mindfulness retreats, wellness nights, personal coaching and yoga (in a barn!)

Bean received her Equine Gestalt Coaching Method certification through the Touched by a Horse program in 2016. Equine coaching is a method of coaching that uses horses to tap into our own awareness and instincts.

*“When a person creates
their own prescription
and when they find their
own answers, that’s when
transformation happens.”*

–Stacey Bean

