

Grieving Your Pet

Tips to Remember Your Beloved Friend

May 31, 2017 by Julie Blackburn, LCPC, NCC, ATR



Pets are an important part of everyday life – they are family. When a pet dies, we experience grief. We may mourn alone, thinking that others may not understand the impact of the loss of our beloved pet. Other times, we share stories and share our grief with others. It is normal to experience grief regarding this loss.

It's important to take time to grieve. You will adjust to the changes in your life as you recognize their absence. You may miss the sound of their steps on the stairs, their greeting you when you return home, or the sound of their snore when you sleep. You may be triggered when you go to buy their favorite treats, drive past their favorite places, or see a pet that looks similar to your pet.

Remembrance Ideas

- Keep your pet's belongings in a safe place. You may want to look at the items at another time.
- Have a paw print made. You may have this done at your veterinary office or you can do yourself with air-dry clay.
- Make a video montage or image slideshow about your pet's life.
- Preserve their scent by placing a favorite blanket or toy, unwashed, in a ziplock bag.
- Make a scrapbook or photo album of special events.
- Create a memory brick about your pet.
- Donate pet toys, supplies, or food to a local shelter, rescue or humane society in memory of your pet.

Help for Children

- Use concrete language with children to explain the loss. Avoid slang or sayings (such as the pet is asleep) that may confuse or instill fears in the child.
- Have a memorial service to honor the life of the pet and encourage the children to have special roles.
- Encourage drawings of special characteristics of the pet.
- Write a letter to the pet.
- Offer to place a photo in the child's room of the special pet.
- Share memories of the pet.
- Read books that help explain the life cycle such as Lifetimes, by Bryan Mellonie; I'll Always Love You, by Hans Wilhelm; or The Invisible String, by Patrice Karst.

These are some simple ideas - personal ideas to grieve, remember and cherish will come naturally that have meaning to you and your pet. Your grief is as unique as your relationship with your pet.



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