



Blue Springs

Animal Hospital & Pet Resort

"It's All About Caring"



Dealing with the loss of your pet

What a wonderful responsibility we take on when we bring a pet into our lives. With the help and guidance from veterinarians, we provide a loving safe and healthy environment for our pets that share everything with us. Our pets see us through marriages, divorce, and the birth of children. Pets endure separation and welcome us back as if we'd been away forever. They are the best pals we have for accepting us as we are.

Pets also help bring us through the losses in our lives. For many of us, our companions are the anchors. We lose a job, we change residences, and we lose friends and relatives through death and separation. The constant is the unwavering love and devotion of a companion animal. One day, that constant will become one of our losses. Now we will grieve because we have lost that companion. Where do we turn? When the kind face and acceptance we used to turn to is gone, where do we go for comfort?

One of the most difficult and important parts of grief and loss is seeking to understand what has happened and that what you are feeling is all right. Your sense of loss may encompass your life and that is all right. You have that right to grieve and you can take as much time as you need. In a busy and demanding world like ours, the trick is to take the time.

You will probably be faced with well-meaning people who feel you should spend a certain amount of time feeling bad and then get over it. No one is able to tell you your time frame for grieving. Only someone who has worked through grief can, tell you about the time it takes to heal. Many stages of grief have been described, and none of them are absolute. Generally the stages are:

1. Shock/disbelief/denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining (often with God)
4. Depression
5. Acceptance/resolution/recovery

Ideally, these stages are supposed to progress from stages one through five in predictable fashion. This just does not happen. Be gentle with yourself. Many of us do not go through all stages and almost all of us will be thrown back into and out of these stages before the healing truly begins. With resolution comes perhaps not so much the "getting on with it" as it does the chance to place the memories in a comfortable spot in your life. You may find yourself very close to resolution when a memory or anniversary of your pet's passing knocks you back into the anger or denial stage. Not only is this understandable but it is also a fact of life. Give yourself time.

If, however, you feel that time is passing too painfully for you or you want some very special and caring support, there are many sources of support available to you.

Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement www.aplb.org

Pet Loss support www.petloss.com

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