



L O V E N E V E R L E A V E SSM

14 Rituals of Healing

The old saying is true: Time does heal.

And, given time, healing will occur for the bereaved pet parent. However, there are several things that the grief stricken pet parent can do to help with the healing process:

1. Give yourself permission to grieve. Only YOU know what your pet meant to you.
2. Memorialize your pet. Do what you need to do to remember your pet and to pay tribute to the life that you shared together. Acknowledging the death acknowledges the life.
3. Create a scrapbook.
4. Set up an area in your home that includes all of the things that were important to your pet; toys, treats, photos, blankets, etc.
5. Plant a flower in memory of your pet.
6. Get lots of rest, good nutrition and exercise. Don't forget your physical needs even though they are the last thing on your mind.
7. Surround yourself with people who understand your loss. Let others care for you.
8. Learn all you can about the grief process. This truly helps people to understand that what they are experiencing is normal.
9. Accept the feelings that come with grief. Talk, write, sing, or draw as a release.
10. Indulge yourself in small pleasures. Take the day off of work and do what feels good for you - a long, hot bath with candles, some "retail therapy," or a long walk in the park, remembering your pet and the joys you shared.
11. Be patient with yourself. DON'T let anyone dictate how long mourning should last.
12. Give yourself permission to backslide. Grief is like waves in the ocean: at first the waves come in fast and hard, but as time goes on, the waves become less intense and further apart. Don't be surprised if holidays, smells, sounds, or words trigger a relapse.
13. Don't be afraid to get help from professionals like grief counselors, and from pet loss support groups.
14. Consult your own "Higher Power," either religious or spiritual.

Finally, let the experience of everyone who's walked this path before you offer this assurance: It WILL end and your life WILL be normal again. It won't happen fast enough for you – it never does – but that day WILL come.