HOME

Losing a Pet Can Hurt more than Losing a Fellow Human

By bestfolkmedicine · 17/07/2019 · 3 min read



Without doubt, the worst fear of pet owners is losing a pet. Unfortunately, when this happens, pet owners face huge pain and emptiness.

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Grieving for our pets is not easy and there is no unique 'how-to-do-it' because every person has a different relationship with their pets.

Dogs and cats live average of 13 years of so, a sufficient period to enter our hearts and become part of our families and daily lives. We play with them, sleep with them, and share happy and sad moments together.

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Hence, their deaths can be a real burden for owners and create emptiness in our lives, similarly to when we lose a close family member or a friend.

Why Does It Hurt so much to Lose a Pet?

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We often project our emotions and ideas into our pets and we see ourselves in them. So, it appears that the belief that owners become lookalike with their pets is a figure of speech pointing to the notion that they're our self-objects.

To understand the relationship human-dog, one may take a look at the qualities which we think our friends should have. For example, trustworthiness, acceptance, respect, no judgment, forgiveness, thoughtfulness, good listening skills, love, humor, and no judgment.

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But, a lot of people don't get all of these traits from their friends. This is why we often see in our pets to be a chance to establish such an amazing connection, full of happiness and gratitude and free of judgment.

Our dogs and cats teach us about patience, kindness, playfulness, responsibility, and the most important thing, unconditional love. Despite chewing our couches, scratching our hands, and hiding our socks, we still find a way to share with them our homes and hearts.

Taking into account the uniqueness of this relationship, it's no wonder that their death can be as painful as losing a family member or a friend. Often times, we have a lot of conflicts with humans over politics, money, religion, etc. which may often contribute to the formation of an emotional distance.

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In the human-pet relationship, these conflicts don't exist and our pets are 100 percent dependent on us.

Yes, we may become angry at them when they misbehave or get frustrated when we cannot teach them to pee in the area for peeing, however; these feelings quickly go away once they look at us with their cute faces.

Grief Is Real when Losing a Pet

According to Psychology Today, grief is without limits and timeline and we all grieve in our own way and for different periods of time. This is conditioned by age, personality, the dog's age and personality, as well as their death circumstances and the depth of the relationship.

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This is why those who live alone find this grieving period to be quite challenging because of the immense role of their pets in their lives, as well as in people with disabilities who lose their seeing-eye dog or their therapy dog who was much more than a friend.

How to Cope with the Loss of a Pet?

If you have recently lost a pet, remember your friend by keeping your connection alive.

This could be a photo framed on the wall, a tree planted in their memory, a symbolic gravestone or any other way that will remind you of them.

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This could be the one of the healthiest ways to go through the grief stages easier.

Sources:

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CBS NEWS

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

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