

EUTHANASIA AND GRIEF

Different situations can bring us to deciding on euthanasia for our dog:

A debilitating disease in terminal phase, age with loss of autonomy, a sudden death or a fatal accident or a behaviour problem threatening the family's security.

Is my animal suffering?

Suffering is bearing or enduring a state that can be painful or not and has direct impact on his life quality. Recall that animals don't complain the same way humans do.

Quality of life for a dog consists in having a good appetite, interacting with us, coming to us to say hello. The veterinarian will be able to help you determining your dog's health and tell you exactly if your dog is bearing or enduring a state that will not get better with medication and to what point it is affecting his life quality. The decision is made with your trustworthy veterinarian. It is better to die than having a debilitating disease associated with a poor quality of life.

The five steps of grief

1 - Choc, denial : this short phase of grief happens when we have to let our life companion go. The person refuses to believe it. It is a more or less intense period where emotions *seem* almost absent. When you leave this short step of grief that the reality of the loss installs itself.

2- Anger: phase characterised by a feeling of anger toward the lost. Guilt can install itself in some cases. Period of questioning.

3- Bargaining: phase of negotiation, blackmailing...

4- Depression: phase more or less long of the grief process characterised by great sadness, questioning, distress. The bereaved in this phase sometimes feel like their grief will never end because they have lived a big range of emotions and sadness is great.

5- Acceptation: Last step of grief where the bereaved gets better. The reality of the loss is more understood and accepted. The bereaved can still feel sadness, but he recovered his full function. He also reorganised his life according to the loss.

The 5 phases above can be linear but it also happens that a bereaved has flashbacks before he restarts going forward. A good way to go through grief is to understand what we are living and share our feelings and emotions with relatives or people that are also living a grief.

These steps are not necessarily in this order. It is not an inevitable *mechanism*. Some people may leave grief and move on to the final stage of freedom of action, but that they could carry feelings can be considered *negligible*. [Elisabeth Kübler-Ross](#)' works

Making grief easier

You first have to discuss it with all family members including children and explain the reasons that are leading to euthanize your dog and that you are doing it for his good so he doesn't suffer anymore. Speak openly with your children about your dog's death and let him express himself without judging. Remember the stages of grief.

Please note that no other animal can replace the dog you have live with for many years. Wait a couple of weeks or months before taking another animal home.

Time is the best remedy

The old saying that the pain fades with time is also true after the loss of a pet, even if, at that time, we refuse to admit it. Accept the loss of your beloved companion and give yourself time to experience your grief.

DOG AGE IN HUMAN AGE

DOG	HUMAN
6 months	10 years
8 months	13 years
10 months	14 years
12 months	15 years
18 months	20 years
2 years	23 years
3 years	26 years
4 years	32 years
5 years	36 years
6 years	40 years
7 years	44 years
8 years	48 years
9 years	52 years
10 years	56 years
11 years	60 years
12 years	64 years
13 years	68 years
14 years	72 years
15 years	76 years
16 years	80 years