

Still Loved, Still Close: Coping With The Loss Of A Beloved Pet

Today's podcast is called, "Still Loved, Still Close: Coping With The Loss Of A Beloved Pet."

The pain of losing a pet is a kind of heartbreak that often goes deeper than words can express. For many of us, our pets are not "just animals." They are family. We share our everyday lives with them—quiet mornings, late-night comforts, little rituals only they understood. So when they are gone, the absence leaves a silence that can feel impossibly heavy.

I have had the joy of loving many wonderful pets over the years, & losing each one was deeply painful. But the loss that was the hardest was my beautiful cat, Molly, who passed away on July 24, 2024. Even now, the grief still stirs unexpectedly. A memory. A photo. A quiet moment when I instinctively look for her & am forced to remember she is not there.

Molly was not just my cat. She was family in every sense of the word. She originally belonged to my late parents, who affectionately called her the "little sister," & I was the "big sister." That playful naming turned out to be quite accurate. Our bond felt more like sisters than anything else. She had a loving, gentle, intuitive spirit, & she was always nearby when I needed comfort. When my parents passed, I adopted her, & the bond only deepened. She was my constant companion, offering her love & gentle presence when I whether I was happy, sad, angry or even sick.

Grieving a pet like that takes time. There is no formula, no set timeline. Grief often comes in waves, & sometimes, long after the world thinks you "should" be over it.

But I found ways to honor Molly's memory that have brought comfort. I ask God to tell her I love her & miss her. I believe He hears & honors those prayers. I look through her pictures often, remembering her bright eyes, her quirky habits, & the softness of her fur. I celebrate the day my parents adopted her, & later, the day I brought her home to stay with me. I smile when I see one of her favorite foods or a cozy spot where she used to nap. These little moments once brought pain, but gradually became little ways of keeping her close.

One of my favorite things I have done is hang a small glass jar with a tuft of her fur from my rearview mirror. Molly loved car rides, & this small act makes it feel like she is still with me. I also wear a locket with some of her cremains inside keeping her close to my heart, where she always belongs.

If you are grieving the loss of a pet, I want to encourage you to find your own small, meaningful ways to keep them close. In the early days, the pain may feel too raw to do anything at all, & that is ok. Give yourself grace. But when you are ready, consider what might bring comfort:

- Create a small memorial space with photos or their collar.
- Write them a letter telling them how much they meant to you.
- Keep a favorite toy or blanket tucked somewhere safe.
- Celebrate their "gotcha day" or birthday each year.

- Carry a keepsake with you.

Grief is not a sign of weakness or an inability to “move on.” It is the proof of deep love. & that love does not end with death, It transforms. It lingers in the quiet, in the memories, in the little moments of connection we still hold onto.

For those of us who believe in a loving God, there is hope that this goodbye is not the end. I trust that Molly is safe in God’s care, & I know He is big enough to carry not only my grief but also the little messages of love I mention in my prayers. Sometimes He even tells me that she also sends her love to me & she misses me. Love never truly dies. It just finds new ways to be expressed.

So today, if you are missing your special companion, know you are not alone. Take your time. Let the tears come. But also, when you are ready, look for the ways to keep their memory alive. You will find them.

What little things can you do to keep your beloved pet close?

Thank you for listening to my podcast!