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**When Family Members Are Reacting Differently to the Loss of Your Pet**

**By Susan Dunn**

**When Family Members Are Reacting Differently to the Loss of Your Pet by Susan Dunn, MA**

**Clinical Psychology, The EQ Coach**

The loss of a family companion animal is difficult, and my heart goes out to you. We come to love our animals and feel a deep sense of loss when they die. Some people tell me they've felt more grief over the loss of their dog than of any human being in their life. It's not always recognized by others, but those would only be people who have not lost an animal companion they loved. Or I should say, who loved them. They give us the unconditional love that helps us thrive.

When we find out our pet is going to die, we each react differently. Each of us experiences grief in a different way. Maybe your partner is angry, and you are tearful, and you are both dealing with the impending death of your animal companion in your own way. The stages begin with denial (shock) and then move on to rage, I believe, but it's a spiral, or an onion, not linear. It comes in waves and doubles back and different feelings are layered in there.

It is normal to not "hear" that your pet is going to die and it's normal to be enraged that nobody cares, nothing can be done, and it can't be fixed. And also to be angry that you and the animal are suffering so. Some individuals are more prone to turning tender feelings into anger, and sometimes we just don't want to talk about it.

In fact, and this is particularly poignant, one of the reasons we love our animals so much is because when we're upset they'd don't ask us why. They just stick around and love us, same as always.

Remember the general family EQ guidance that all feelings are welcome here, though all actions are not. Your partner is an adult and is in charge of his or her own wellbeing, as you are of yours. As with any adult, you can accept and acknowledge the feelings, and can make it known you're available to talk with. If there are any behaviors from this anger that are destructive in any way, then seek help. You can also use, "When you say X, I feel Y. Please do Z."

Any two adults will generally grieve in a different way. They'll be at different stages in the grief process,

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have different backgrounds, different histories of previous loss, have different personalities, and also can reverberate off the other, i.e., if he's crying all the time, then she becomes stoic. If she's angry, he tries to remain calm.

Stay centered and manage your own grief process. Take care of yourself. Massage is good at such a time, as such grief is beyond words.

If this is one of your children's first major loss, it's going to be a tremendous growth process for them, as you know. Be there. Don't demand they feel one way or another. Don't try and "fix" them. Process when you can with them as a means of sharing the adversities of life. Adversity builds resilience, and difficult as it is, they're part of life.

Seek comfort and help for yourself - friends, a minister, a coach, a therapist. Take care of yourself and

model this for your children. You can't share the whole experience with them because they aren't having the same experience as you because they are they, and you are you.

I'm sorry for your loss.

Susan Dunn, MA Clinical Psychology, The EQ Coach, <http://www.susandunn.cc> . Coaching for all your needs. Coaching and distance learning in Emotional Intelligence. EQ matters more to your success and happiness than IQ and it can be learned. [Mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc](mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc) for FREE eZine.

### **The Top 10 Reasons to Own a Pet**

**By Kelly Redmond**

#### **The Top 10 Reasons to Own a Pet by Kelly Redmond**

Americans love their pets, but do they ever think about "why?"

1. A pet teaches you responsibility.
2. You can get lots of exercise by walking your pet.
3. If you get lonely, you have a friend to play with.
4. You can save a pet's life by adopting one from a shelter.
5. The pet needs a friend.
6. A pet always greets you at the door even when you've had a bad day.
7. When your Mom makes a terrible dinner, your pet can clean it up.

8. A pet can guard your house.
  9. A pet can make a boring car trip much more fun.
  10. The pet will love you, no matter what!
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About the Submitter This piece was originally submitted by Kelly Redmond, 4th grade (almost), who can be reached at [info@catholicschoolkid.com](mailto:info@catholicschoolkid.com), or visited on the web. Kelly Redmond wants you to know: I am one of the creators of CatholicSchoolKid.com and am starting 4th grade in the fall. I like to sing, play piano and train my three dogs. . The original source is: CatholicSchoolKid.com. Link: [http://www.catholicschoolkid.com/kellys\\_page.htm](http://www.catholicschoolkid.com/kellys_page.htm)



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