

ANIMALS FIJI

HOW TO COPE WHEN YOUR PET DIES



Opinion



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Losing your pet can be a very emotional and challenging experience. It hurts! They may have been part of your life for many years or maybe only a few or even a few months. But in that time, they have shown you love and devotion that is unique and special.

It is normal to feel sad and have feelings of loss for days and weeks after your pet's death.

You may feel lonely as they are no longer around to keep you company. You may have taken them for a daily walk, and now, you are at a loss for what to do at that time of day.

You may feel guilty about not caring enough or giving them enough pats or cuddles when they were alive.

If you lose a pet to an accident or an unkind act, you may feel extremely angry at the circumstances or the person who caused it.

The bond between a pet and its human is often deep and meaningful, making losing a furry friend very painful.

Here are some thoughts for you to consider when you lose your pet.

- Don't let people tell you how to react. For many people losing a much-loved pet is the same as losing a loved human. No one should tell you to "move on" or "get over it". Everyone grieves in their own way and in their own time. It is okay to be angry or sad, to cry or not cry. It is okay to laugh at the memories and find joy in the time you spent with your pet. It is also okay to let go when you are ready. It is a very individual experience.
- Talk to other people who have lost a pet. Talking to someone you know who has recently lost a pet can be helpful. It can be reassuring to know that they may have felt the same way or learn from them how they coped with their loss and you can apply their advice to your circumstances.
- Create a memorial. It can be helpful to plant a tree or buy a favourite plant as a memorial. You can create a photo album of memories. Writing down

NOTE:

Animals Fiji Cremation/Burial service

Animals Fiji cannot cremate or bury your pet in the Northern Division due to resources. However, our Nadi Clinic offers burials on a local farm and cremation services. Your pet is respectfully cremated, and we secure their ashes in a dedicated container for you to collect. There is a small charge for both of these services.

stories to remember them or little things that made you laugh and cry about your pet is a great way to honour them. Put up a Social Media post to remember them and let your friends know you have lost a best friend.

- If you have other pets. Your other pets will also experience loss when a pet dies, or they may become upset to see you sad. It is important to ensure you continue your routine with them and even increase exercise and play times with them. It will benefit them as well as you.
- Give to other pets in need. One of the best ways to honour your pet is to do something to help other pets. Go to an animal shelter and ask if they need items you can buy to help the shelter care for their rescue animals—they will certainly appreciate your assistance. You may also consider volunteering for them, where you can help walk the dogs, play with the cats or even help them fundraise.

Consider giving a "forever" monthly donation in memory of your pet or a once-yearly donation on the anniversary of your pet's birthday or death day. Any assistance to animal shelters is always greatly appreciated.

- Look after yourself and your family. The stress of losing a pet can affect your health, so it is important to eat a healthy diet, drink water, exercise and sleep. If you don't, you may get ill and that will only make things worse. Remember to talk with your family including children, as they will also miss the pet but may not understand their feelings. Give them as much support as you can.

Source: Animals Fiji

must read

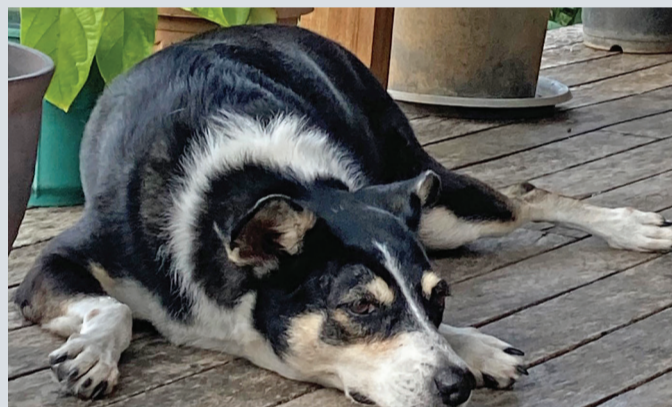
ANIMALS FIJI

As a non-profit charity, Animals Fiji depends on the kindness of donations to continue in their work to support animals across Fiji. To find out more about Animals Fiji's services and how you can help please contact their Savusavu Clinic at (+679) 998 6253 or Nadi Clinic at (+679) 993 6647 or visit their website at www.animalsfiji.org. >ANIMALS

MY STORY



An older cat resting quietly.



An older dog resting. Older animals often need more rest and may have issues with stiff joints and getting around as easily.



As Bundy aged he became deaf, and his around his mouth and the inside of his ears went grey. This picture is a favourite as it looks as if he is taking one last look to say goodbye.

I don't think it matters that you know your animal is going to die and that you know that it is going to happen. When it does, it is just the saddest thing. My dog Bundy, was my companion for 14 years.

He was diagnosed with jaw cancer a few months before his 17th birthday and I was told he would only possibly live for one month as the cancer had most certainly spread.

How did I react?

I decided to take him on walks twice a day. I usually only took him when I felt like it and the weather was good, but in his last weeks, he got extra attention. He also received fresh chicken mince to wrap his pain relief medicine in instead of his usual food. I gave him extra pats and 'good dog' praises, even though he was deaf and couldn't hear me.

Yes, I felt guilty that I hadn't been good enough to him and that he had been such a loyal dog to me.

One day Bundy was obviously in so much pain that my husband and I decided it was time to say goodbye. That trip to the Veterinary Clinic was one of the hardest things to do, but it was for the best - ending his suffering was far more important than our sadness at losing him.

The day after he died, I wrote many special memories as I didn't want to forget those special moments. I posted a picture of Bundy on Facebook with those memories so that everyone who knew him would know that he had passed. I

received comfort and condolences from my friends.

As we lived in a large town and couldn't bury him on our property, we had Bundy cremated. We picked up his remains later that week and I placed a printed copy of my memories in the box that contained his ashes.

I put a special photo of him in a frame and placed both items on a shelf in a room with other items that have particular importance in my life.

Yes, I miss him terribly, but I choose to remember all the good times. Will I get another dog? Definitely, but not just yet. In the meantime, I get my dog cuddles from the animals that come into the Animals Fiji and the pets of friends and acquaintances. That will do for now.



My dog Bundy when we first got him as a rescue dog.