

Tasks of Grief

- To accept the reality of the loss: to experience and express the reality of the death.
- To feel the feelings about your pet who died and about how they died. This involves experiencing the pain of grief as well as celebrating joyful memories.
- To nurture oneself physically, emotionally, and spiritually through the process. This task emphasizes the importance of self-care.
- To adjust to an environment in which your pet is missing. Others have spoken of this as relearning to live in the world, now that your pet is gone.
- To convert the relationship with your pet from one of presence to a relationship of memory.
- To develop a new self-identity based on a life without your pet.
- To relate the experience of the loss to a context of meaning. Grieving often involves a reexamination or shift in a person's values, beliefs, and priorities.
- To reinvest in life and go on living and loving after your pet has died.

Each person's journey through grief is unique. Not every person will need to work on every one of these issues. Each person will know what issues are important for them as they look at this list.

This list is based on the work of Alan Wolfelt and William J. Worden.

