




## Keys for Coping with Pet Loss



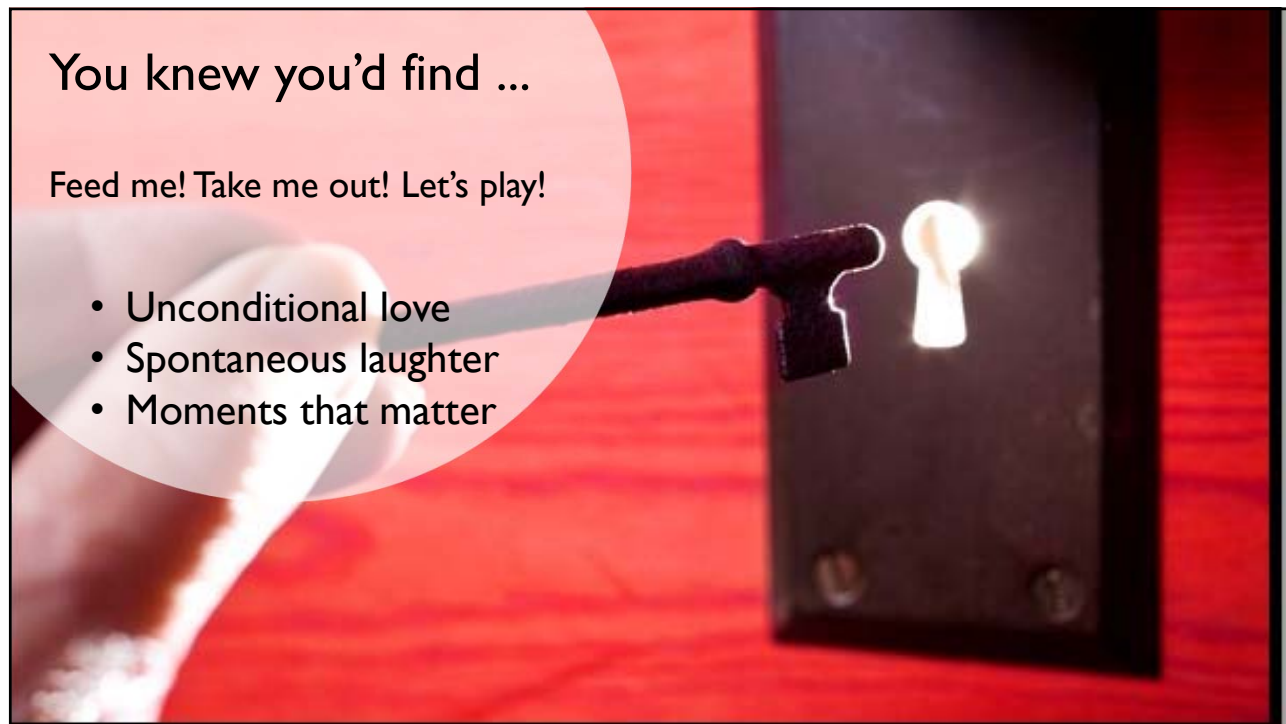
WAGS – September 8, 2018  
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*For years, each day or night ...*

your pet enthusiastically  
welcomed you home when  
your keys opened the door.



Today, we're going to give you "keys"  
to help you understand your grief.  
To cope. To hope.



I invite you to pull out your keys.



## Common Myths (Locks) About Loss and Grief

- You've said to yourself?
- Someone has said to you?
- You've said to someone else?

## Hope: Keys for Coping, from Grief Research



- Different Kinds of Grief
- MOURNing and MORNing\*
- Your “Grief Forecast”\*
- “Re-Membering”\*

Find “keys” that help you unlock your grief, with comfort and hope

\*Joy’s application of evidence-based grief research and clinical practice, for you.

**Different Kinds of Grief**

Name it. Claim it.

“Yes, this describes **my** grief!”

- Anticipatory Grief
- Sudden Grief
- Disenfranchised Grief
- Delayed Grief
- Ambiguous Grief
- Complicated Grief



## Some Things You Can Do

- Write down the names of your different pets, through the years
  - Name which kinds of grief you experienced
  - Name painful pieces that—perhaps—need some attention and care
- Draw a timeline of your life, with all significant losses
  - Divorce of parents, a huge move or other change
  - Grandparents, parents, friends
  - Loss of an important goal or role
  - Look for patterns that bring insight into how you cope (or not)
  - More ...

*Let's keep moving ...*

## Hope for Coping: Grief vs. Mourning

*“Grief”* is about how the loss affects you.

*“Mourning”* is more proactive.

It's about what you choose to do with your loss and grief.



Do you treat your  
loss like dirt to  
throw away?



Or, with nurture for new life ahead?



“**Mourning** relates not so much to the **reaction** to the loss, but, rather to the **process** by which a bereaved person **integrates the loss** into his or her ongoing life.”\*

\*L. Despelder and A. L. Strickland, *The Last Dance*.



## Replace the “Stages” with ongoing “Processes”

“**Stages of Grief**” were identified during research with **terminally ill** persons who were dying.

Not with **bereaved** persons surviving the loss.

BIG difference!

Denial

Bargaining

Anger

Depression

Acceptance

**Dual Process: Loss & Life**  
Both going on at the same time


Parts of me:  
dead or  
alive?

Restoration

Loss



Others  
journey on

Stroebe and Schut identified the "Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement: Loss and Restoration," 1999.



Loss and Restoration

# MOURNing and MORNing


More root words for  
 “MOURNing” and “MORNing”  
 have to do with ...

- Death (MOR-tal)
- Change (meta-MOR-phasis)
- Seasons for planting and sowing



Through the ages, philosophers, poets, artists, musicians, and more have described grief like the “seasons.”



## Winter, Spring, Summer or Fall

You just call out my name  
And you know wherever I am  
I'll come running, to see you again

Winter, spring summer or fall  
All you've got to do is call  
And I'll be there  
You've got a friend.




Carole King, sung by James Taylor




## What if you had your own “grief” forecast?

**7 DAY OUTLOOK**

THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED
37° 23°	38° 22°	40° 29°	39° 29°	37° 23°	36° 22°	42° 29°
VERY	COLD	LIGHT SNOW NIGHT	60% 1" OR LESS	60% 1-2" MORNING		



## You DO! Your “Grief Forecast”



When You’re Experiencing <sup>1</sup> ...	→	You Can Do This <sup>2</sup> ...
• Shock, numbness, disbelief	→	• Accept realities of the loss (Note: Healing grief starts with “Acceptance,” little bits at a time, again and again)
• Longing, yearning, “searching” for the person or thing you’ve lost	→	• Work through the many different pains of your grief
• Feeling really disorganized toward life, you feel “lost,” everything is different	→	• Adjust to everyday moments and places where the person or thing you’ve “lost” is gone
• Life is feeling “reorganized,” different from before	→	• Find an enduring connection with the deceased while embarking on a new life

<sup>1</sup> “Processes,” from Colin Parkes, *Bereavement in Adult Life*. <sup>2</sup> “Tasks of Mourning,” from J. William Worden, *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy*.





# DIS-Member

Loss and grief can “DIS-member” us

It’s PAINFUL! FRIGHTENING!

It can lock-block us ....



*“I’ll never, ever [fill in the blank] again!”*



## WAGS Ambassadors

Relate this loss and pain to the elderly persons we visit. They’ve experienced “Dis-Membering” of their health, homes, belongings, deceased family and friends. From their pets.

Many deeply miss being able to have their pets. Our pets may—likely—stir both “loss and life”—together, at the same time.

Get to know those we visit through their stories about their pets! Learn from them. Cherish the loving moments your pet gives and receives.

## RE-Membering the pet, person or thing you've lost into something new, for now and ahead ...



What qualities—from your pet—do you want to live? To give?

- Presence. Joy. Forgiveness. Love.
- “I’m so happy to see you!”
- “Let’s play!”

What best parts of yourself—with your pet—do you want to continue?

- Being Dependable. Open. Emotional.
- Giving **and** Receiving!





## RE-Membering







## Re-Membering Our Pets Through Seasons Ahead

*"Close your eyes & think of me"*  
and I'll be with you in your  
mind and heart

# We Re-Member Those Who Have Died

*"Close your eyes, and think of me ...  
and I'll be with you in  
your mind and heart*



## Re-Membering Our Beloved WAGS Ambassadors

You still teach us how to live and give!









*We sincerely hope we did not miss any of our  
Ambassadors that have passed on.  
However, if we inadvertently left anyone out,  
we sincerely apologize.*









