

GriefPlan.com

with Dr. Jason Troyer



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Healing with Animal Companions

I am not suggesting that you can replace a loved one with an animal companion. I simply want to emphasize how healing animals can be for the bereaved. If, after careful consideration, you believe a new animal companion may be helpful for you, then this reminders can help you choose wisely.

Considerations for a new animal companion

- What is a reasonable match between your energy level and the animal's energy level?
- Consider the lifespan of the animal. For example, some exotic birds can live for 50+ years in captivity. Make sure you are ready for the commitment.
- Consider the benefits of rescuing an animal. Adopting an older dog or cat will help you avoid their most challenging (destructive) phase of life and you will have more information about the animal's personality.
- If you're considering a new dog, use this website to determine breeds that will fit your lifestyle: www.akc.org/dog-breed-selector/
- What is your plan for integrating the animal into your lifestyle? What changes do you expect to make to accommodate the animal? What do you think will be the biggest change?

Journaling Prompts

If you already have an animal companion, how has the animal helped your grief process? Are there any ways in which the animal has not helped? If you're looking for a new animal companion, what type of animal and what personality are you looking for? What activities do you hope to participate in with the animal?