

Five-Step Process Toward Healing
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1. **Knowledge:** Knowing what to expect if your pet is ill. Don't be afraid to ask question of the professionals. Get all the facts that you can. You cannot make any decisions unless you know what your options are. If your pet has already died, ask about services that may be available. This is all a part of the healing process. Finding the perfect way for you and your family to put closure in this stage is of the utmost importance.
2. **Internal dialog:**
 - A) **If your pet is very ill**, the what if's can drain vital energy that you need to help the pet. Keep the what if's at bay while keeping an informed, clear head.
 - B) **After the passing** of a pet, it can be expected that one's own internal dialog may kick in. The key here is to not allow it to hamper the healing process for you or a family member. The dialog can become negative and damaging. I think for the most part, each of us will experience some amount of this. However, learning to turn the negative dialog into positive needs to be done as soon as possible. Example, when we lost our beagle, Penny, I felt extremely bad about her death. When I felt this way, I would remind myself that she was no longer in pain and that we gave her a wonderful life while here on earth.
3. **Support system:** A true pet lover faced with an illness or death of a pet needs a good support system. There are many breed-specific and general dog groups on the Internet, which are free and members can help one another via discussion. There are also professional counselors that deal with this as well. To vent your feelings, find a friend or family member who understands.
4. **Take steps toward healing:** Find some way that is comfortable for you and your family to remember your pet. It can be something as small as planting a rose bush in honor of the pet in an area of the yard your pet loved to lay. There are places on the web to light a virtual candle in honor of your pet. Most importantly, when talking about your pet, try to remember the good times. It is all too easy to remember the last moments. Think about how you would want people to remember you. Apply this same theory to your pet.
5. **Time:** each and every one of us will heal in our own time. Again, knowledge is key here Understand that if you are finally able to find closure, but a spouse or a child cannot, give them the space and time they need. However, express to them that you are here if they want to talk about it. This is very important.