

an
unforgettable
friend™



With
Unfailing Love

A Step-by-Step Pre-Planning Guide for Pet Lovers

Resources

How to Write a Eulogy for a Pet

http://www.ehow.com/how_2122846_write-eulogy-pet.html

Eulogy for a Dog

<http://www.usmessageboard.com/pets/169375-eulogy-for-a-dog.html>

Pet Ownership Linked with Better Heart Health

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/12/pets-heart-health-dog-ownership_n_3239290.html

Miscellaneous Quotations

<http://www.beliefnet.com/Love-Family/Pets/2010/06/Pet-Quotes.aspx>

Our Pets as Spiritual Teachers

<http://www.blogher.com/our-pets-spiritual-teachers>



Table of Contents

Welcome	3	Step 3: Your Pet’s Memorial	11
Step 1: Make Your Pet’s		Step 4: Capture Your Memories Now	12
Final Arrangements	4	Step 5: Convey Your Wishes	13
Burial	4	Step 6: Live Well Together...	
Cremation	5	Until You Say “Farewell”.....	14
Who are the Trusted Pet Care		Closing Thoughts	15
Providers in Your Community?.....	6	Resources.....	15
Notes from Initial and			
Follow-Up Conversations:	7		
Step 2: Plan a Remembrance Ceremony	8		
Details of Your Plan.....	9		
Writing a Eulogy for Your			
Companion Animal	10		



Welcome

It takes a brave person to *look* ahead, and if you are willing to *plan* ahead for the death of your animal companion — then you are not only brave, but fully committed to responsible care giving.

We've put together this short guide to help you prepare for that inevitable day when you must part company and grow into accepting the passing of your animal companion.

We know it's hard — no one wants to even *think* about that day. We also know that taking the preparatory steps now will give you a lighter heart and greater peace-of-mind.

Not only that, making these decisions now will give you and your family the chance to really sit down and talk. It's important to come to an agreement about how you wish to care for your pet's physical remains, celebrate their life, and pay tribute to their memory. Although difficult for some, this conversation can be a powerful experience for everyone involved. It brings the whole family together in a way unlike any other.

Our hope is that this guide and the recommended conversation give you the time to reflect upon what is both appropriate and meaningful in caring for your pet. This time will ensure that they receive the kind of care in death that was so important to you during their lifetime.

We are confident pre-planning will help to relieve much of the stress and heartache you and your family will feel on the day you are forced to say good bye to your beloved pet. So, as the poet William Wordsworth wrote, "*Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart...*"

"...he will be our friend for always and always and always."

Rudyard Kipling

Step 1

Make Your Pet's Final Arrangements



Arrangements for Your Pet

The choice I made:

- ☐ Burial ☐ Cremation

Burial

If this is your preference, where will your pet's remains be interred?

- ☐ My Home
☐ Friend or Relative's Home

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

- ☐ Pet Cemetery

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

For burial, will you want a casket to protect the pet's body?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

This involves making the decision between the cremation of your pet's physical remains, or burial. Unfortunately, it's not always a straightforward decision — and is affected by local bureaucratic ordinance as much as personal preference.

Burial

Many people live in locations where the burial of their animal companion can only take place in a pet cemetery. Many local regulations prohibit the burial of animals on private property or in an urban environment, which greatly limits burial options. You should consult your local animal shelter or county office to learn of any existing restrictions. Other questions you should address in making this decision include:

- Will you always live in this area or have access to this burial ground?
- Do your religious preferences guide you in one direction or another?

"It's funny how dogs and cats know the inside of folks better than other folks do, isn't it?"

Eleanor H. Porter

Cremation

Pet crematories usually offer families a choice between private and communal cremation. The distinction is an important one: do you want your pet's physical remains attended to individually or should the cremation take place along with the remains of other animals? The ashes can be returned to you with the first option while the second option involves the crematorium scattering co-mingled ashes.

Are you concerned about receiving the right ashes?

Talk to your pet care provider about their verification process. Reputable pet crematoriums use a tracking system where a tag with a unique number accompanies a pet's remains. Put yourself at ease by inquiring about the use of a trusted authentication process.

Arrangements for Your Pet

Cremation

Is it important to you to have your pet's body cremated alone in the crematory?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Will you want the ashes returned?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If your answer is "no", you need to ask your pet death care provider for a communal cremation. Your pet will be cremated with others; their ashes will be scattered in a designated area. However, if you answer "yes", you should choose the option of a private cremation.



Turn to the Trusted Pet Loss Provider in Your Community

We want you to know that as professional pet loss specialists, the staff of our firm can take care of all your pet pre-planning needs. But, we encourage you to speak with your veterinarian, and reach out to friends for their referrals. Write their contact details in the following section, which also includes space for any notes taken during future phone or in-person conversations. We've given you enough room for one complete review — including the questions you need to ask. In providing you with these tools, we are confident you will discover that the value and integrity of our services.

Questions You Need to Ask

- May I inspect the facility where my pet's aftercare will be performed?
- What is your cremation verification procedure?
- How long will it take to get my pet back?
- Does your facility provide truly private or individual cremation, where only one animal is cremated at a time? What is the cost? How does that compare with the cost of communal cremation?
- Will you come to our home, night or day, to pick up our pet? Is there an additional charge for this?
- Can you pick up my pet from any vet or animal hospital?
- How will my pet be transported to your facility?
- How and where is my pet kept until they are cremated?
- How do I know that I am only getting my pet's ashes back?
- What kind of container will my pet's cremated remains be placed in if I decide not to purchase an urn?
- How long does it take from the time my pet is picked up until we can pick up the cremated remains?
- Besides the cremation, what else is provided with your cremation services?



Pet Care Provider
Name of Pet Loss Provider
Name of Contact Person
Address
Phone
Website
Facebook Page
Recommended by

Notes from Initial and Follow-Up Conversations:

[illegible]

Step 2

Plan a Remembrance Ceremony



Remembrance Ceremony

Will you want a viewing or visitation; a last time together with your pet?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Many families wish to have a remembrance service, where family and friends can come together in mutual support and sorrow. Do you wish to have a service of remembrance for your pet?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you like to incorporate ceremonial activities during this time? Consider the following options:

- Special readings of poetry or prose
- Music
- The planting of a tree/flower/bush
- Scripture readings
- Candle lighting
- A charitable donation drive for a local shelter in memory of your pet
- A memory table with photographs, your pet's favorite toys — anything tangible that was a big part of their life
- Writing, and reading aloud, a eulogy to your pet

While Step 1 involved making practical decisions regarding the care of your pet's physical remains, this step in the pre-planning process takes you into the realm of ceremony, emotional release, and commemoration. Caring for your pet during their lifetime involved respecting their unique individuality — now it's time to reflect on ways you can come together with friends and family to pay tribute to their personality and the life you shared. You may also wish to have that one last time to visit your pet after their passing — what has been traditionally called a *visitation* or *wake*.

Having one last time with your pet can be a very special experience, but it's not an opportunity most people realize they even have. Do you think having the time to see your pet at peace, lovingly cared for by a pet loss professional, would be valuable to you, your children, your friends and your extended family? It really can be a profound way to say your goodbyes and begin the grief journey in earnest.

"A dog is the only thing on earth that will love you more than you love yourself."

Josh Billings

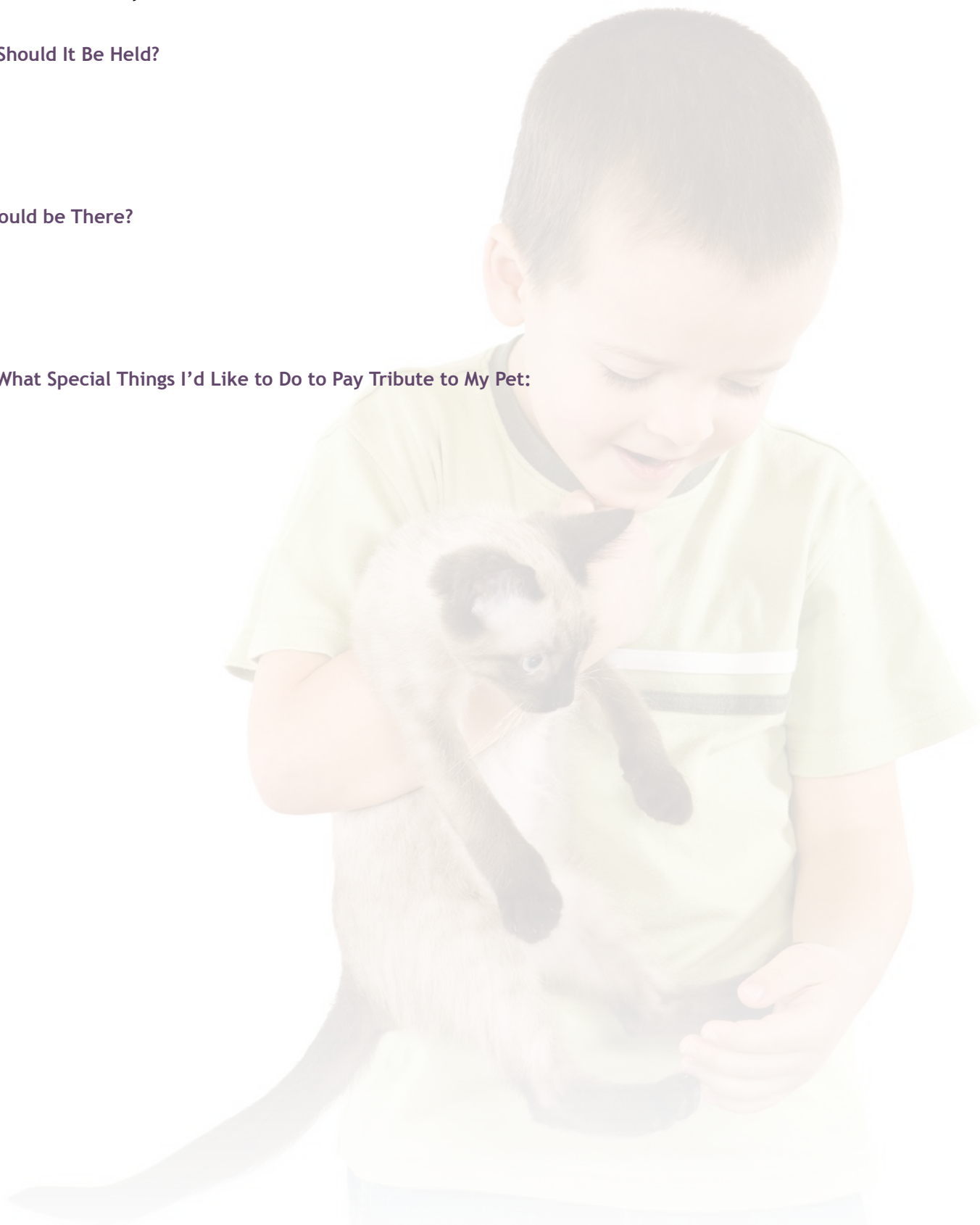
Details of Your Plan

Write down where it should be held, who you'll invite, and what you'd like to include in your pet's remembrance ceremony.

Where Should It Be Held?

Who Should be There?

Here's What Special Things I'd Like to Do to Pay Tribute to My Pet:



Writing a Eulogy for Your Companion

One of the most moving eulogies we've read was written by Senator George Graham Vest back in 1870. He wrote not to a single dog but in acknowledgement of the profound gifts given by the class of animal:

"The best friend a man has in this world may turn against him and become his enemy. His son or daughter that he has reared with loving care may prove ungrateful. Those who are nearest and dearest to us, those whom we trust with our happiness and our good name, may become traitors to their faith.

The money that a man has, he may lose. It flies away from him, perhaps when he needs it the most. A man's reputation may be sacrificed in a moment of ill-considered action...The one absolutely unselfish friend that a man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him and the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous is his dog.

"A man's dog stands by him in prosperity and in poverty, in health and in sickness. He will sleep on the cold ground, where the wintry winds blow and the snow drives fiercely, if only he may be near his master's side. He will kiss the hand that has no food to offer, he will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounters with the roughness of the world. He guards the sleep of his pauper master as if he were a prince. When all other friends desert, he remains. If fortune drives the master forth an outcast in the world, friendless and homeless, the faithful dog asks no higher privilege than that of accompanying him to guard against danger, to fight against his enemies, and when the last scene of all comes, and death takes the master in its embrace and his body is laid away in the cold ground, no matter if all other friends pursue their way, there by his graveside will the noble dog be found, his head between his paws, his eyes sad but open in alert watchfulness, faithful and true even to death."

Naturally, the writing style is outdated, but the sentiments are timeless. The Internet is a great resource, full of wonderfully witty and thought-provoking (not to mention heart-rending) examples of pet eulogies. For those who wish to eulogize their pets, simply enter the search term "pet eulogies" into Google and you'll discover some instructive, even inspiring, examples.

If writing a eulogy to your animal companion ahead of time sounds like something you would like to do, here are a few simple guidelines you can follow:

1. Celebrate your pet by sharing a brief timeline of his life. Share a story of the day you brought him home; a special event in his life, or speak of the friends (both human and animal) he or she treasured.
2. Share your pet's memorable characteristics; their playfulness, protectiveness, whether they were calm, or generally excitable. Remember, there's never going to be another "Lulu" or "Scruffy" so be sure to infuse your eulogy with his or her delightfully unique qualities.
3. Describe how your pet changed you in unexpected ways, or otherwise made you a better person.
4. Lots of folks give their pets a voice by imagining (and speaking the words aloud!) what he or she would say in this – or another – situation.
5. You may wish to bring your spiritual beliefs into the eulogy. Do you believe your pet had a soul, which is now frolicking in heaven, or was reincarnated as a higher being? Share your thinking, your feelings, and your perspective on the afterlife of your pet.
6. Provide closure at the end of the eulogy, by saying "farewell" through a prayer, a poem, or by closing with a meaningful song. And never be afraid to cry in front of others. This is a very emotional time, and everyone in attendance will understand.

Step 3

Your Pet's Memorial



The Memorial

Do you wish to create a memorial in commemoration of your animal companion?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Ideally, where would you like this memorial?

- ☐ Inside my home ☐ In my garden ☐ Other

If "other", please specify your desired location:

There are a number of pet memorialization products and remembrance keepsakes to choose from in creating a meaningful memorial. These can include garden flagstones, bird feeders, personalized keepsake jewelry, remembrance candles, and memory boxes.

The desired memorialization items to remember our pet are (please list):

Personalization will make your pet's memorial as unique as the relationship you shared and your words will be a true reflection of the love. What would you like engraved on your pet's memorial?

We've heard so many wonderful ideas for pet memorials. Just like the decisions you made earlier, making a decision about memorializing your pet is a very personal process. Your selection will be reflective of the life shared with your pet, your lifestyle, personal style, and those little things which capture your pet's unique personality.

Your first decision will be the location of your pet's memorial. Should it be inside your home or in your garden? Does it make more sense to pay tribute to your pet with a donation to charity, or through the purchase of a commemorative brick or flagstone for your local dog park? The possibilities are almost endless!

"The difference between friends and pets is that friends we allow into our company, pets we allow into our solitude."

Robert Brault

Step 4

Capture Your Memories Now

Capturing Memories

Birthdate/Adoption Date: _____

Date of death (if applicable): _____

Location of birth or adoption: _____

Nicknames: _____

Names of Pet Parents: _____

Siblings – Pet and Human: _____

Favorite Toy(s): _____

Favorite Activities: _____

Least Favorite Thing(s): _____

Other Friends: _____

Favorite Place to Sleep: _____

Favorite Food: _____

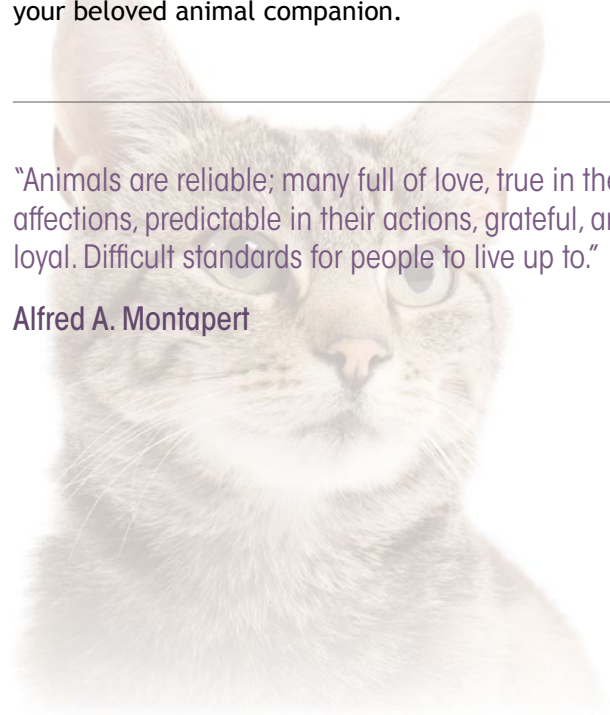
Favorite Memories: _____



Here's the place where you shine a spotlight on your pet's life story. The information you include here will help us to create a fitting Remembrance Ceremony for your beloved animal companion.

“Animals are reliable; many full of love, true in their affections, predictable in their actions, grateful, and loyal. Difficult standards for people to live up to.”

Alfred A. Montapert



Step 5

Convey Your Wishes



Now that you've completed this guide — perhaps alone or in the company of other family members — you've got everything you need to complete the online pre-planning tool. By transmitting your plan to us for safekeeping, when the day comes that you need our services, we will have the information already on hand to help.

If this is not the right decision for you (perhaps you're not sure where you'll be living at the time), then simply put this completed guide in a safe place. It will be invaluable at some point in the future.



Step 6

Live Well Together...Until You Say “Farewell”



“It’s official: Pets really are good for your health.” So began the online article Pet Ownership Linked with Better Heart Health from the Healthy Living section of the Huffington Post. It seems recent “research has shown that dog-owners get 54% more exercise than pet-free people. And other research shows pets can help lower stress, blood pressure, cholesterol and obesity, and that owning a pet boosts survival among people with heart disease.”

This isn’t news to many who share their lives with an animal companion; after all, they’ve often felt the positive side effects of animal companionship. They know, as do you, sharing your life with an animal can enhance your health and well-being in many ways. And you, as his or her human companion, reciprocate lovingly each and every day you spend together.

That’s the job now. Get out there and enjoy spending as much time as possible with your animals. Make marvelous memories, and savor the moments. One blogger wrote, “Our pets can be great teachers of love, loyalty and compassion. We love them and often take them for granted.” She then goes on to admit, “At some point, the persistent love of my pet made me see that my dog might just be training me.”

Study hard, and teach them well! You are joyous participants in a delightfully-rewarding relationship. Make it remarkable!

“All of the animals except for man know that the principle business of life is to enjoy it.”

Samuel Butler



Closing Thoughts

Congratulations! By planning ahead for your pet's final needs, you:

- Protected your family from having to make difficult decisions during an emotional time
- Made your decisions ahead of time, weighing out the options of burial over cremation, the types of service or preferred merchandise
- Determined your family's needs and budget ahead of time
- Finalized your pet's cremation or pet burial pre-arrangements, eliminating hastily made decisions and later regrets

And in planning ahead, you are continuing to give your pet the kind of lifelong care he or she so richly deserves. A life where every gesture, every action taken on your part is intended to add quality to their day-to-day life.