

A SHORT GUIDE

The Quiet House

*for the first days and weeks
after you lose a dog*

The house is quiet in a way it was not last week. That is not something to fix today, and this is not a guide that promises to fix it. It is a few pages of plain company for the part of this that nobody warns you about: the first days, the strange weeks after, and the small things that help. Read what helps. Skip what does not. There is no right order and no schedule.

The first days

You do not have to decide everything now

The only decisions with a clock on them are the practical ones your vet or the aftercare provider will walk you through, like burial or cremation. Everything else, what to do with the bowl, the bed, the leash by the door, can wait a day, a month, or a year. Some people put everything away that night. Some people never move the leash. Both are normal, and neither one means you loved them more or less.

Eat something. Sleep when you can.

Grief for a dog is real grief, and it lands in the body: no appetite, bad sleep, a fog that makes work feel impossible. Treat yourself the way you would treat a friend in the same week. Lower the bar. Cancel what can be canceled.

If you had to decide the day

If yours was a decision, you will replay it. Almost everyone does. Too soon and too late can both feel true in the same hour, which tells you something important: there was no version of that day that would have felt right. You made a hard call out of care, with the information you had, for an animal who could not make it for themselves. That is not a failure. It is one of the last kind things you did for them.

Telling people

Tell the people who knew them, in whatever words come out. A one-line text is enough: we lost her this morning. The people who loved your dog will want to know, and saying it out loud, even badly, is part of how it becomes real enough to carry.

The routines will ambush you

You will reach for the food scoop at the usual hour. You will pause at the door out of habit. Your hand will drop to the height of a head that is not there. These moments are sharp and they are normal, and they soften with time. Let them come; they are proof of how woven-in the love was.

The weeks after

Grief does not move in a straight line

A decent Tuesday does not mean you are done, and a terrible Saturday three months in does not mean you are going backward. Grief comes in waves with quiet in between, and the waves get further apart without ever fully stopping. Missing them for a long time is not a problem to solve. It is the shape love takes when the dog is gone.

Nobody grieves a fifteen-year friendship on a two-week schedule.

When someone says it was just a dog

Some people will not understand, and a few will say so out loud. You do not owe them a debate. Your dog saw you every single day: sick days, bad years, the version of you nobody else got. That is not a small loss, and you are allowed to grieve it at full size. Find the people who get it and let the others be wrong quietly.

The other animals in the house

Dogs and cats often notice. Some search the house, some go flat for a week, some eat less, some seem unchanged. Keep their routine steady, give them more of your time, and mention it to your vet if eating or behavior changes hang on. Caring for the animal who is still here can be one of the gentler parts of a hard month.

Children

Plain words work best: died, not went away. Soft phrases meant to protect can leave a child waiting for the dog to come back, or afraid to ask what really happened. Let them be sad with you, let them ask the blunt questions kids ask, and let them help remember, with a drawing on the certificate in this kit, or a story at dinner. Children handle honest sadness better than confusing comfort.

Guilt, again

Weeks in, guilt gets inventive: the walk you skipped last winter, the vet visit you wonder about, the afternoon you were short with them. Every long love has those. Your dog did not keep that ledger, and fifteen good years outweigh any afternoon.

Remembering them

There is no required way to remember a dog, but doing something on purpose often helps more than waiting for the sadness to fade on its own. Some small ones families come back to:

- Print the certificate in this kit, write their name and years, and put your favorite photo of them in the middle. The plaque template fits a frame you already own.
- Write down the stories you tell about them, in your own words, before the details blur. The zoomies. The stolen sandwich. That look.
- Take the walk you always took, one more time or once a year, on their day.
- Plant something that comes back every spring where they liked to lie in the sun.
- When you are ready, in your own time, give away or donate what another dog could use. A shelter can do a lot with a barely used bed.

If it gets too heavy

Most grief, even hard grief, softens on its own. But if weeks pass and you still cannot eat, sleep, work, or look after yourself, that is worth saying to a doctor or a counselor, the same as you would for any other loss that big. Pet loss is taken seriously now: many veterinary schools run pet-loss support lines staffed by trained volunteers, and your own vet can point you to one, and to counselors who understand that this was family. Asking is not dramatic. It is just true that some losses need company.

About this kit

This guide, the certificate, and the plaque template are free to print and share. Veterinary clinics, shelters, and rescues are welcome to copy them for families, unchanged, whenever they would help. They come from the small team at Best Friend Supply, made because we have sat in the quiet house too.

Permission, in writing: print, copy, and hand these pages to anyone grieving a dog. No sign-up, no charge, no strings. The latest copies live at bestfriendssupply.com/memorial/kit.