GRIEF COMPANION SHEET

For anyone losing a dog, or missing one.

A ROUGH TIMELINE

First few days	Weeks 1 to 4	Months 2 and 3	Month 6 and beyond
Shock and numbness	Heavy waves	Waves spread out	More stories than tears

Every timeline is different.

WHAT HELPS

- Keep the old walk times
- Say your dog's name out loud
- Lean on people who get it
- Make 1 small memorial
- Call a pet loss hotline

WHAT USUALLY DOESN'T

- Avoiding the walk route for months
- Going quiet so nobody gets upset
- Packing up everything the first weekend
- Adopting fast just to stop the hurt

ABOUT THE GUILT

Owners feel grief, guilt and blame at similar rates after euthanasia and natural death. Guilt is love, not proof of a mistake.

Source: Dog Aging Project research, Texas A&M University, 2026.

SIGNS IT'S STARTING TO EASE

- ☐ You laugh at a story before you cry
- ☐ You can pass the empty spot without bracing
- ☐ A dog like yours makes you smile first
- ☐ Sleep is coming back
- ☐ You feel curious about shelter dogs again

REACH OUT IF

Grief still blocks work, sleep or time with people after a year. Grief feels scary or too heavy at any point.

Cornell University Pet Loss Support Hotline: 607-218-7457 (call for current hours)

Call or text 988 for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

letthembedog.com

This article shares what we have learned from our own experience. It is not medical advice, and we are not veterinarians. If you have any concerns about your dog's health, please check with your vet.