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VOL. 19 ISSUE 1

Researchers Find That Losing a Dog can Be as Hard as Losing a Loved One

Anyone who has ever owned a dog knows that they are so much more than just a pet, they are a part of your family.

And that's why it's so hard when they pass away. Whether they lived a long, healthy life, or left us way too soon, the pain of the loss is something that is almost unbearable.

But there are people out there who tell us to "get over it" because "it's just a dog." Those words are so hurtful because to us they were so much more.

Well, while there is nothing that I can say to make your loss any less painful, at least we now have research to back up the fact that the mourning process is very much real. Not only that, but it's actually been found that it may be harder to get over the death of a pet than it is to get over the loss of a human.

I know that might sound crazy, but here are the claims the study makes.

The thing is, we bond with our pets in the same way we bond with other people. The same hormones and chemicals are released in our brains that make us feel loved and connected, and after spending years together they are no different than the rest of your family.



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Laura and Peter Mossakowski Family
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But why would that make it harder to get over? Well, there's no acceptable way to mourn the loss of a pet.

If one of your human family members passes away, there are countless resources to which you can turn to manage the pain. You are surrounded by loving supporting friends and family members who try to help in any way they can.

You can turn to counseling and therapy, all without any kind of criticism from others because they expect you to be going through a hard time.

However, when your pet dies, you are expected to carry on with your life as though nothing had happened.

You've got to return to work, keep up with your social engagements, and continue on with the rest of your life without any kind of understanding from the majority of people.

Sure, your closest family and friends know what's going on, but even they may not really understand how deeply this is affecting you.

Without those extra resources to help deal with the pain, you're left repressing all these emotions and not really getting the opportunity for resolution.

It's not just about losing the pet themselves according to psychologist Julie Axelrod. She suspects that part of it is that you're also losing a source of unconditional love and comfort, as well as a companion.

Also, this loss leads to a huge disruption to someone's daily routine, sometimes more than the loss of actual human loved ones. You have to schedule your day

around your dog, and suddenly losing all of that order can leave a person feeling completely lost.

One of the saddest things that happens to dog owners who lose their companions is that for a while after they continue to interpret things as though it was their dog. For example, something will fall over in another room and they will call out to see if it was the dog, or they may even hear the noises they would make when there actually was nothing.

It's our memories playing tricks on us, but needless to say it's kind of difficult.

Guilt also plays into it quite often, as with animals we are often forced to make a difficult choice to end their suffering. While it's the humane option, it doesn't make it any easier to say goodbye. We can't help but feel like there was more we could do, and it brings another level that we just can't handle.

So next time you start to feel upset over the loss of a pet, remember that it is absolutely okay to be heartbroken. They are a member of your family no matter what any non-dog lovers say, and it's absolutely understandable that you still miss your dog, science says so.

If you know someone who recently lost a pet, maybe let them know that you're there for them. The gesture may be exactly what they need.

By Tanya | Nov 23, 2018

Source: <https://viraltoday.com/researchers-find-that-losing-a-dog-can-be-as-hard-as-losing-a-loved-one/>; Tonic / PsychCentral

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11 Things You Didn't Know About Alpacas

Spoiler alert: The fiber from their fleece is flame-resistant!

By Melissa Bruyer, December 10, 2018

Alpacas may just be the cutest of all the Camelidae family, which includes llamas, guanacos and vicunas from South America, and Bactrian and Dromedary camels from Asia and Africa. With their floppy furry tufts, slender necks, ingénue eyes and coy Clara Bow grins, they are the “it” girls and boys of the ungulate world.

But beyond their charming, quirky good looks, these creatures are responsible for bearing some of the silkiest, most versatile fiber found in nature, for which they are shorn annually. Alpaca is a specialty fiber that has been described as stronger than mohair, finer than cashmere, smoother than silk, softer than cotton, warmer than goose down and better-breathing than thermal knits. Along with that, alpacas themselves possess some pretty remarkable personality traits.

In honor of all things Vicugna pacos, we're filling you in on everything you never knew about these captivating camelids.

1. They're ancient

Alpacas were domesticated by the Incas more than 6,000 years ago and raised for their exquisite fleece. Due to its quality and all of its superhero characteristics, alpaca fiber was reserved exclusively for the elite and nobility.

2. They're trendy

In 1984, a small group of importers brought the first of a carefully selected herd to the United States and Canada, and they've been dotting the bucolic landscape ever since. The North American herd has grown from a few alpacas in zoos and private farms to about 20,000.

3. They're therapeutic

When most people think of therapy animals they imagine dogs, but therapy alpacas are growing in popularity at hospitals, healthcare facilities and retirement homes around the world. For example, one couple in Australia has been providing therapy alpacas for 15 years. “They're very sensitive and they're very intuitive animals,” alpaca owner Nils Lantzke told *The Canberra Times*. “We find that after people have a talk and a pat with the alpaca,

they become more relaxed and it makes the environment a lot happier for everyone.”

4. They grow superlative, hypoallergenic fleece

Alpaca fiber is much like sheep's wool, but warmer and not itchy. It is lacking in lanolin, which makes it hypoallergenic and also allows it to be processed without the need for high temperatures or harsh chemicals in washing.

5. They're flame-resistant!

Well, technically their fiber is flame-resistant, meeting the standards of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's rigid testing specifications as a Class 1 fiber for use in clothing and furnishings.

6. They're water-resistant

Like wool, alpaca fiber is water-resistant, but it can wick away moisture because of its unique ability to mimic cotton in moisture regain. These attributes are what make alpaca feel lighter than wool but warmer than cotton in cool and damp climates.

7. They come in a rainbow of hues

Alpaca fiber comes in 22 colors and hundreds of shades, from white to light rose gray to dark fawn, in addition to the blends that can be made from those, thus minimizing the need for pollution-intensive dyeing.

8. There are two types of alpacas in this world...

Alpacas come in two types: Suri and the huacaya. The suri has fiber that grows long and forms silky dreadlocks. The huacaya has a wooly, dense, crimped fleece — like a teddy bear — giving it a very wooly appearance. About 90 percent of all alpacas in the North America are huacayas.



Continued on page 4



Donn Foote DIVISIONAL MANAGER



Donn joined Forever Friends team in October of 2014. Prior, he was with a local landscape company for 12 years as a product supervisor. Donn brings to Forever Friends a professional customer service relationship background.

Born and raised in De Pere, Donn still resides there with his wife Sara, two sons and dog, Belle.

Donn is a member of Resurrection Catholic Church, a member of the Knights of Columbus and serves on the advisory committee for the Bellevue Dog Park. He enjoys being with his family and going camping, golfing and playing softball in his free time.

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www.animalhospitalofhoward.com

Oak View Veterinary Hospital
www.oakviewvet.com

Continued from page 3 — 11 Things You Didn't Know About Alpacas

9. They can mix and match

Alpacas and llamas can successfully cross-breed. The offspring they create are known as huarizo, which are valued for their longer fleece.

10. They share a bathroom

Alpacas use a communal dung pile (where they do not graze, thankfully). Because of their predisposition for using a dung pile, some alpacas have been successfully house-trained.

11. They hum and haw ... and orgle

Humming is the most common sound that alpacas make. Alpacas hum when they are curious, content, worried, bored, fearful, distressed or cautious. When startled or in danger, a staccato braying is started by one animal, then followed by the rest of the herd in the

direction of the potential threat. During breeding, the male alpaca Romeo emits a unique throaty vocalization called "orgling."

During the National Alpaca Farm Days (which occur during the last weekend in September), alpaca farms across the country will open their gates to visitors of all ages to meet the wooly loves.

Editor's note: This article has been updated since it was originally published in September 2012.

Farms in De Pere

<http://www.shillcoxalpacas.com/>

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