

10-10-10 Perspective for Pet Loss Grief

The 3-3-3 rule for newly adopted pets has become a standard for understanding how they need time to adjust.. Pet loss grief has its own kind of adjustment period too. Maybe we can loosely think of it as a 10-10-10 perspective. Not an exact formula for what to expect, but a gentle way to understand why everything feels so disorienting and why it takes a lot of time and patience to adjust after a major loss.

The first 10 Days

Shock & Survival

- Grief is shocking and disorienting
- It's normal to still hear or see them
- There's a distinct separation distress
- Despair, anger, and fear are normal
- You don't feel like "yourself" at all
- Basic life things can be hard (eating, drinking, sleeping, etc)
- You may feel shut down and numb

The first 10 Weeks

Rewiring

- Grief slowly becomes more familiar, but grief waves can intensify
- Longing and loneliness are profound
- New routines are slowly establishing, but they hurt
- There are good days, and they're complicated
- Deep sadness remains
- Other people assume you're "better"
- What-ifs and guilt may still be on repeat
- You might wonder if your deep grief is normal

The first 10 Months

Acclimation

- Grief continues to show up unexpectedly even in ordinary moments.
- You may be surprised by what still hurts so much.
- The intensity is different, but the depth remains.
- You miss who you were when they were here.
- Connection shifts from physical to internal, cognitive, or spiritual
- Exploring opening your heart again is common
- You're understanding how healing is not forgetting