



Euthanasia - A Painful Decision

Myths About Euthanasia

People have mixed feelings about euthanasia, and with good reason. No matter how much we know the decision has to be made, it still feels like murder to many and guilt will haunt us for a long time

Even when we know euthanasia is the “best” and most “Merciful” choice for our pet, it means nothing when we are actually faced with making that decision. Many pet parents delay their decision and often will try and justify it by telling themselves the pet looks better. This decision is often at the expense of the pet itself as they are left to suffer for a longer period.

Three Common Misperceptions of Euthanasia

1. Euthanasia is not a natural process. Some pet parents reject euthanasia as “unnatural”. Some believe that lives are mapped out and nature has a plan for every living being. Disrupting that plan by “unnatural” euthanasia is just disrupting nature's plan. This belief overlooks the fact that by providing treatment, surgery, medication or any form of care to a sick or injured pet is already extending that pet's life far beyond the less tender hand of nature. Euthanasia is often not so much a question of “artificially ending” a life, but of determining when to cease artificially extending that life.

2. Euthanasia is selfish. One of the common sources of guilt is that you have euthanized a pet too soon or for your own selfish reason. “I should have done more”, I should have got a second opinion. The person who worries so much about not having done enough is usually the person who has already gone to great lengths to care for their pet. A far more dangerous form of selfishness is to prolong a pet's suffering simply to postpone one's own.

3. My pet will tell me when it's “time” Many of us have heard of pets who allegedly offered some indication of acceptance of death, of being “ready to move on” Wouldn't that be so nice to get permission to end your pet's life? Waiting for a sign that may never come only prolongs your pet's suffering.

Euthanasia: The Most Painful Decision

Many think of bereavement as beginning after loss. For many, however, grief can begin much earlier. Often, it begins the day you realize your pet is approaching the end of their life – even when the final loss of your pet may be many months away.

This stage of grief is especially difficult, because it is without closure. You can't make an effort to “get over it” because you have yet to suffer the loss. Thus, no matter how bad you feel, you know things are going to get worse. It can be difficult to find comfort during this stage, for even people who understand the pain of bereavement may wonder why you are grieving before your pet has actually died.

Grief for impending loss is complicated by the need to make difficult, painful decisions. How much treatment are you willing to do, how much can you really put your pet through and will it be even worth it, at what point do you consider euthanasia?

