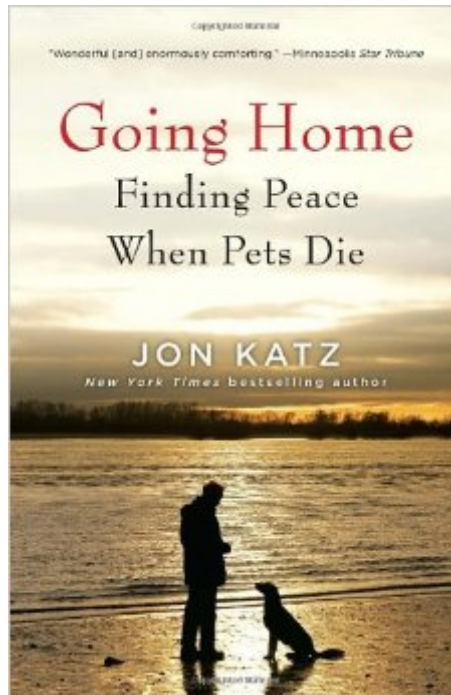


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Going Home: Finding Peace When Pets Die



Synopsis

In this invaluable guide and touchstone, New York Times bestselling author Jon Katz addresses the difficult but necessary topic of saying goodbye to a beloved pet. Drawing on personal experiences, stories from fellow pet owners, and philosophical reflections, Katz provides support for those in mourning. By allowing ourselves to grieve honestly and openly, he posits, we can in time celebrate the dogs, cats, and other creatures that have so enriched us. Katz compels us to consider if we gave our pets good lives, if we were their advocates in times of need, and if we used our best judgments in the end. In dealing with these issues, we can alleviate guilt, let go, and help others who are undergoing similar passages. By honoring the animals that have graced our lives, we reveal their truly timeless gifts: unwavering companionship and undying love. With a brand-new Foreword by the author

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Customer Reviews

I have read most if not all of Jon Katz's books and have reviewed at least one in both the print and electronic media. I have found them to be insightful, well-written, and generally displaying a thoughtful understanding of animals, especially dogs, that will cause the reader to smile, sometimes laugh out loud; shed a tear or two; and nod their head in understanding and agreement with many of the opinions and theories offered by Katz. This book is a bit different in that it deals with a subject many fear facing, the death of a cherished animal. Katz encourages the reader to accept, even welcome, grief that naturally occurs when a loved companion pet dies and to recognize it as a healthy sign...within limits. He argues that we should recognize grief as a normal, even healthy,

result of our deep feelings for our pets and we should not be ashamed of our feelings. However, he cautions that we should learn to accept the death of an animal as a natural occurrence and not try to second-guess how we treated our pet, especially if we had to make the sometimes gut-wrenching decision to euthanize it due to illness, injury, etc. He suggests that mourning is natural and that we should strive to remain connected internally by finding a place for them in our current lives. This can be as simple as remembering them to sharing memories of them with others to more formal activities such as memorials, etc. I have recently lost a companion dog and have found myself second-guessing my decision to have him euthanized a number of times. This book has helped me think through my relationship with him and to almost stop the second-guessing, almost but not quite. At least the book has helped me view my relationship with him in a different light and to relearn the fact that death to an animal is a natural part of life and not something they dwell on but accept in the natural order of things. I do not agree with Katz when he asserts that dogs cannot tell us when it is time for them to go. I have had many dogs and truly believe that most if not all have told me in their own way that it was time. However, that said I heartily recommend this book for anyone that has recently lost a pet or is close to experiencing such a heart-breaking event or, for that matter, anyone that simply wants to know more about the subject of pet loss and grieving. This book may well be one of those that become more helpful after more than one reading. I plan to reread it and suspect I will discover more helpful ideas, suggestions, and common sense that I missed the first time. I still miss them all but maybe, just maybe, I did the correct thing in the case of those that I had to have euthanized.

Having lost a dog around the same period as I received an advanced reader copy of this book, I was unsure of what to do. My black lab Ozzie had been a part of my life from a young age, and in a sense we grew up together. I'm 24 and Ozzie came into my family when I was 12, but I quickly took to him and he became like a furry brother for me. His death left a void in my life and I immediately picked up this book. *Going Home* was both poignant and helpful for me in accepting my dog's death. It tells of celebrating a dog's life and how blessed I am to have been able to experience his life and his gifts to my family and my own life. Katz's own experiences with the death of his dog Orson resonated with me as I searched for hope and comfort in the days after Ozzie's death. What I learned, though, is that Ozzie changed me as a person. This book is the type that will teach you about the power our relationships with our pets have on us as people. This book helped ease the grieving process involved with the death of a beloved family pet. Ozzie was more than just a pet, though. He really was part of my family. After reading *Going Home*, I learned to celebrate his life

and be grateful for everything he did for me and my family. If you are in the process of grieving the loss of a pet, this is a book you cannot miss. It helps so much.

I have been a long time Jon Katz fan until now. When I got to the chapter where he had Elvis, his pet steer, hauled off to the slaughterhouse I erased this book from my reader. I was horrified that Mr Katz could do this to a people loving, trusting animal and do it in a fairly cold manner. I am no longer a Jon Katz fan.

If there is one thing that Jon Katz makes perfectly clear in his latest volume on our relationship with animals, *GOING HOME: FINDING PEACE WHEN PETS DIE*, is that our pets are not "furry children," they are not people. We can love them as they fill important gaps in our lives but we should not feel guilt, a phenomenon unknown to animals, when we have to make responsible decisions about the ends of their lives. We should consult with our vet but the decision is ultimately ours. Based on the information we have, we should move forward, reminding ourselves that we have done our best. That is good advice. There is a wealth of other good advice in this book that should become a reference manual for people dealing with losing a pet and the accompanying grief that follows. Since only about 50% of the population has pets, we should be careful about whom we seek out for comfort, perhaps another animal lover or a sensitive friend so that we don't hear from well-meaning people that he was just a dog or a cat after all. Or we can find help via the internet, where we can remain anonymous, from others who have suffered similar losses. We should anticipate what will happen at the end of our pet's life so we should be prepared, as best we can, when the end comes and grief overcomes us. Everyone grieves in his own time. As Emily Dickinson reminds us, sorrow has its own season. Since animals cannot speak, we have an obligation to speak for them and do the responsible thing for them. We should be honest with our children when their pet dies as well. Mr. Katz suggests that children are much better able to deal with the death of a pet than many of us believe. One of the most beautiful things about this book is Mr. Katz' incredible candor, something that should not surprise anyone who has read his previous books. He says of his beloved border collie Orson--whom he has written about before-- that he had to have put down after the dog had bitten three individuals: "He was the dog who changed my life." Powerful words. Mr. Katz goes on to say that he felt closer to "this crazy dog" than to his own father, that the dog brought him to a farm and to a new romance in his life. Another dog Izzy was a prince of an animal when it came to visiting people in hospice and taught Katz a great deal about dying. Another dog Stanley always made him laugh. Of course there was no dog like another border collie Rose. Finally,

"Animals have taught me how to love purely. And patiently. They have helped fill some of the lonely gaps of life. They have helped me to be a better human being. That, I think, is their legacy and glorious purpose." Mr. Katz' latest offering should be a book you will come back to again and again for both advice and comfort when your beloved animal "goes home."

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