

## Pet Loss Support

### **After a beloved dog's passing, when is the best time to get a new dog?**

*By September Morn*

**Q.** We recently had to have our 14-year-old American Pit Bull Terrier-Greyhound mix Samantha put down. She was our best friend. She died in our arms at the veterinarian's office. The emotional pain is intense. It's been two days since her passing and burial and we miss her so much. We just don't know if now is a good time for another dog — or if we should wait until we've really accepted her passing. We know she can never be replaced. Our only hope is that we could love another dog as much as our Samantha.

**A.** I'm very sorry for your loss. Our beloved dogs never get to stay long enough. While Samantha was with you she made a big, loving place in your heart that only a dog can fill. There can never be a replacement for her, but that dog-shaped spot left by her passing can at some point be filled by a successor dog — not a replacement.

It is completely normal to feel a period of terrible, deep grief after the passing of a special dog. Moving through that grief can be easier for some people if they adopt another dog right away. Others need to wait until their grief subsides. Each person is different.

When the ache of losing your beloved dog changes into a more generalized longing for the special company a dog provides, you'll know it's time to start looking for a successor. This shift can be subtle, but you'll recognize it when it happens.

There will never be another dog just like Samantha, so don't make that the measure of your next dog. Trying to find another Samantha would set you up to be disappointed and not fully appreciate your new dog's special qualities. The new dog will have her own unique personality and characteristics that will enrich your life in their own ways. And as the new dog wags her way into your heart, you will grow to love her as much as you loved Samantha — not the same way you loved her, but as much. And that love will honor Samantha's memory, because her life with you taught you to deeply love a dog.