

Make a Pact: Only Do Things That Help

Veterinarian Jim Humphries coined the phrase “*Covenant of Compassion*” to describe a “deal” or pact that we should all have with our pets. It’s a promise that we will not let them suffer. The pact states that we will only do those things that will help them toward health and better function - both physical and emotional - but nothing that prolongs a hopeless struggle.

Entering into this pact takes both courage and compassion because it means that when the fight cannot be won and your pet is suffering, then you will make the brave but difficult decision to let your pet go. You will act for them, not for yourself.



Some pet owners hope that a very sick pet will simply pass in their sleep, or that nature will “take its course.” But all too often, indecision continues the pet’s suffering - sometimes to death. That’s the last thing we want for our pets and it’s why we need a Pact of Compassion.

No one ever wants to say goodbye to a beloved pet. Making the decision is very, very hard. You may feel ready, but when the time actually arrives, it becomes very real and emotions can overflow.

You make the final decision with both your head and your heart. Rationally, you understand that nothing more will benefit your pet and it’s time. But emotionally, it will always hurt – a lot. Everyone who has ever made this decision experiences both. It’s normal and you’re not alone.

Most veterinarians would agree that very few pet owners feel that they’ve made the decision for euthanasia too soon. Many, many more wish they had made the decision earlier. Planning ahead helps make decision-making easier. And always have a backup or contingency plan if events suddenly change.

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