



## COMPANION ANIMAL

# Bucket List Thoughts



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# I'm sorry.



Hi, I'm Kate.

If you're here, it is likely because you are facing end-of-life with your beloved friend and for that, I am so very sorry. But, I'm so glad you're being proactive and thinking about the difficult choices ahead. End-of-life decisions are never easy and the weight of that responsibility and the burden of that love that we're entrusted with can be overwhelming at times. But knowing that you're here, looking for resources and guidance, tells me your loved one has a loving, caring guardian and is in good hands.

I'm a professional, certified behavior consultant & trainer, specializing in fear and aggression and a certified companion animal death doula, so I'm uniquely qualified to help you navigate these difficult times and help provide you and your family with the emotional support, tools and education to navigate this time of transition. I'm so very sorry for your impending loss and am here to support you if you would like me to.

 *Kate*



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I love the idea of a bucket list and giving your dog a couple of really amazing last days. Doing a bucket list for your beloved helps you know you made their last days as amazing as possible and also gives you some long-lasting happy, positive memories to cherish.

Unfortunately, many dogs who are terminal may not be feeling up to lots of adventure, so it's important to ask yourself, what would Fido enjoy most, not what do you want to do with Fido...because those answers might be very different. We need to consider your pet's energy level, stamina, and comfort level before engaging in activities for a bucket list.

For example, for dogs with low appetites or who are lethargic, or who don't enjoy car rides, their bucket lists will look very different than dogs who are still eating and love car rides.

That doesn't mean we can't or shouldn't do anything but we should tailor the bucket list to the dog in front of us now. This may mean a beach trip but not one where Fido is running around but we keep it low-key and sit on a blanket in the sand for a bit and just take in the sights and smells and memories of that special spot.

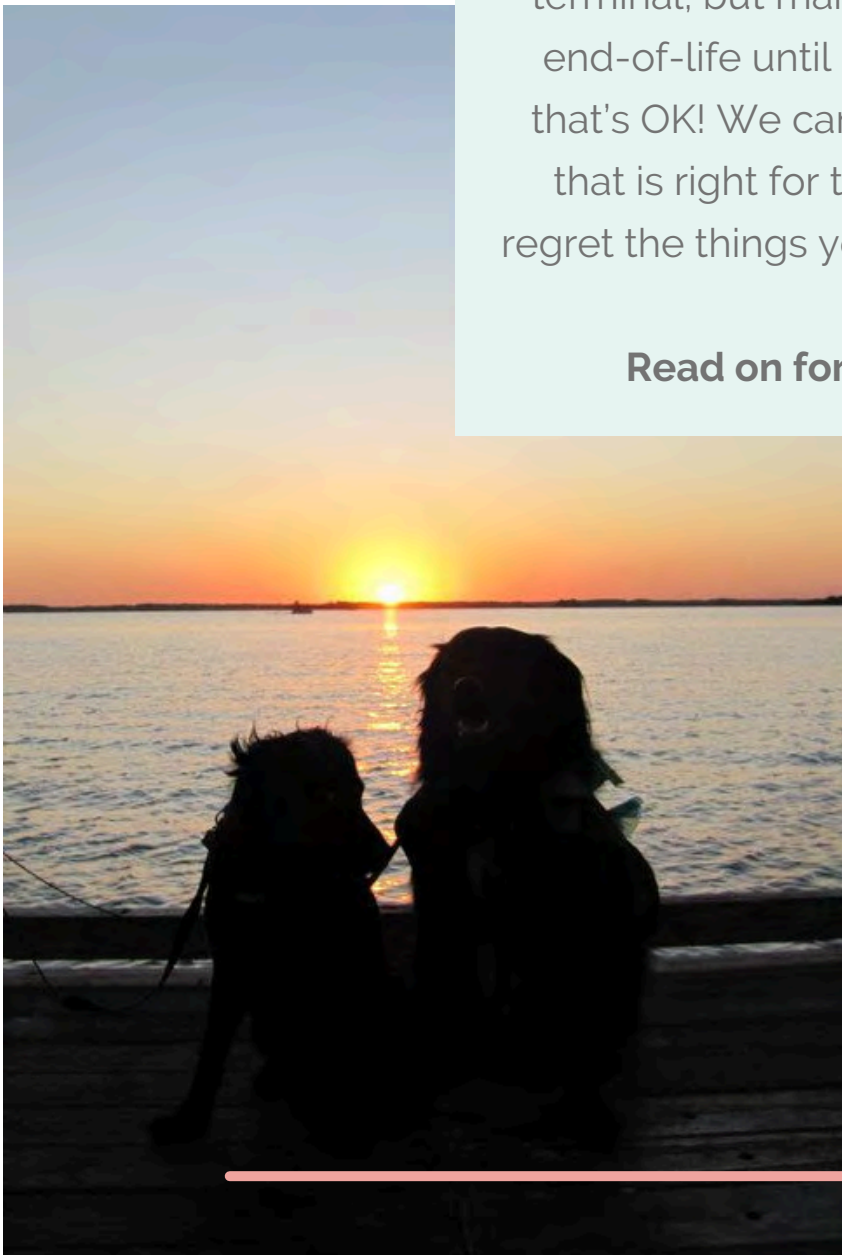
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# Creating The Right Bucket List for Your Dog At This Time

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The best way to live out a wonderful bucket list is to do it before your dog gets really terminal, but many people don't think about end-of-life until it slaps us in the face. And, that's OK! We can still make a wonderful list that is right for their current state, and not regret the things you missed the chance to do.

**Read on for some specific ideas!**



# *Here are some of my personal favorite bucket list items*

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- **A family photo shoot.** Many people feel weird about this, because they don't want to document these final days, but from personal experience, these are some of the most treasured photos I have of our deceased dogs and they are on our walls along with pictures from happier days to help remind me of the full, beautiful lives we shared. The Tilly Project is a great resource for finding a photographer.
- **Cuddling** or what physical contact your dog loves like grooming or massage.
- **Have a party,** a going-away party of sorts. Invite your dog's favorite people to come and say their goodbyes and to support you in your anticipatory grieving period. If your dog is super social, maybe have it at a public park and open it up to your community through a social media post. We did this with one of our dogs and to our surprise, complete strangers came bearing fast food snacks for him.
- **Sunbathing** in the yard or at a park
- **Visiting** a favorite hiking or walking trail
- **Beach** visit
- Stopping by all your local **pet-friendly spots** like outdoor dining places and pet stores
- Picking a **special toy or treat** at the pet store
- **A swim** or dip in a pond or stream
- Being **off-leash** (if safe)
- **Long sniffing** walk, letting them take it in for as long as they want. If they can't walk, bring some of the outdoors to them – rocks, leaves, ask friends with animals to swap some toys, to be able to bring your dog some interesting smells
- **PJs day** at home on the couch or in bed
- **Car ride** with windows down
- **Drive-through** fast food (or bring it home if they can't do car rides)
- **Soft-serve** vanilla ice cream
- Lots of **pictures and videos**, especially anything quirky you want to remember
- **Recording sounds** of breathing, barking or other vocalizations

*Of course we all want as much time with our animals as possible but I urge you to prioritize quality time over quantity.*

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Of course we all want as much time with our animals as possible but I urge people to **prioritize quality time over quantity**. Vets will always say it is better to say goodbye a week early than an hour too late. We never want our animals to suffer and we have the ability to prevent that from happening.

The most important thing to remember that you and your dog are enjoying yourselves and spending time together during these final days, weeks and months.

If your pet is too sick or disabled to safely and comfortably participate in something then skip it or modify it.

A bucket list should be celebratory and never a source of stress, guilt or that we're not doing enough. Cherish these moments. I'm so sorry for your impending loss and am here to support you.

 *Kate*

# Want more help?

Did you know that I publish a new blogpost each week, packed with important info on all things dog behavior and navigating grief? Check it out [here](#). I know you'll find it super valuable. And be sure to follow me on social media!



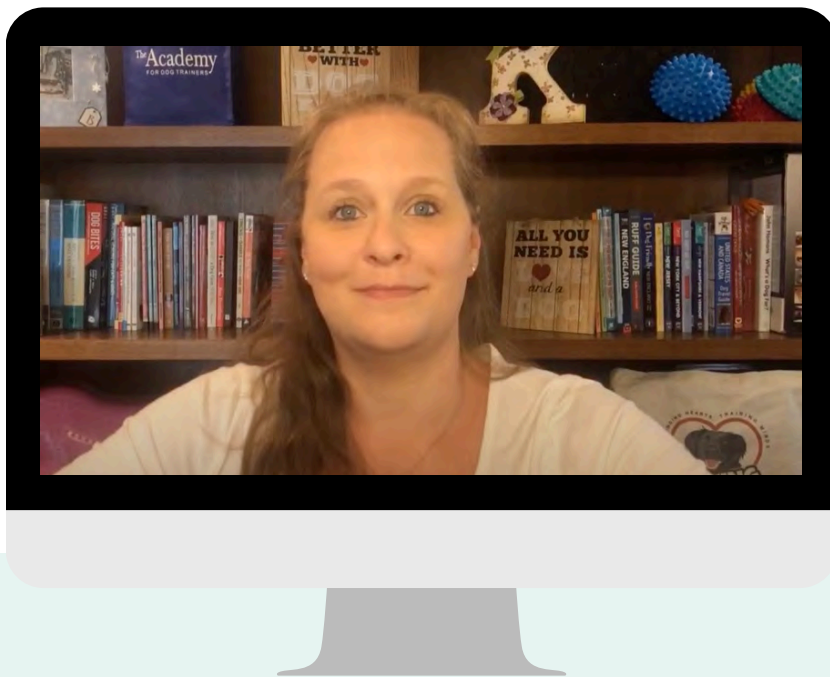
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