

Losing a beloved dog is a heartbreak that never leaves us untouched. If you're reading this, you may be walking through the early days of grief, perhaps wondering when—or if—you'll feel ready to welcome another dog into your life. As a breeder, and more importantly, as someone who has also said goodbye to deeply loved dogs, I want to acknowledge how complex this journey can feel. There is no "right" timeline for when to welcome a new puppy—only the one that feels right for *you*. And I want to gently remind you: there is no rush. Healing takes time, and choosing to wait can be one of the most loving decisions you make—for yourself, for your future puppy, and for the memory of the dog you've lost.

Grief and New Beginnings Aren't Mutually Exclusive

One of the most common concerns I hear from families grieving a recent loss is: *"Is it too soon?"* My response is always the same—grief and love are not competing emotions. Missing one dog doesn't mean you can't begin loving another. A new puppy will never replace the dog you've lost, nor should they. Instead, they carve out their own space in your heart, bringing a different kind of joy and purpose at a time when you may need it most.

That said, bringing a puppy into your life while grieving can be emotionally intense. Puppies require patience, energy, and consistency—all things that can feel hard to give when you're still working through sadness. It's important to be honest with yourself: *Do I have the emotional capacity to raise a puppy right now?* Sometimes the answer is yes. Sometimes, it's "not quite yet"—and both are perfectly okay.

Why Waiting Can Be a Loving Choice

Choosing to wait gives you space to grieve fully and to honor your late dog's memory with the presence and respect they deserve. It allows you time to reflect

on the kind of companion you want in your life moving forward—without the influence of fresh pain or impulse.

By allowing that space, you give yourself the opportunity to:

- **Make an emotionally grounded decision** rather than one fueled by heartbreak.
- **Celebrate your previous dog's life fully**, creating meaningful closure before beginning again.
- **Ensure your home environment**—and your heart—are ready to embrace the responsibilities of raising a puppy.
- **Welcome a new puppy with open arms and an open heart**, not with comparisons or subconscious expectations.

Grieving doesn't mean forgetting. And waiting doesn't mean you're moving on. It simply means you're giving love the time it needs to reshape and rebuild.

A Gentle Checklist for Readiness

If you're unsure whether you're ready for a new puppy, here are some reflection questions that might help guide you:

- Am I hoping to get my old dog back—or am I truly ready to meet a new one, just as they are?
- Can I see this new puppy for who they are, without comparing them to the dog I lost?
- Do I have the time, energy, and emotional bandwidth to raise a puppy with patience and consistency?
- How might this new addition affect any existing pets in my home?
- Am I making this decision from a place of peace—or from a place of pain?

There are no "right" answers—just honest ones. Even sitting with these questions can bring you closer to clarity.

Considering the Other Pets in Your Home

If you have other dogs in your home, they too are feeling the absence. Dogs can experience grief in their own way—through changes in appetite, energy, behavior, or interactions. They may become more withdrawn or more clingy. Introducing a new puppy during this adjustment period can be stressful for them,

especially if they're older, emotionally fragile, or closely bonded with the dog who passed.

Giving your current pets time to adjust to the change in household dynamics helps them rebalance emotionally. It also gives you the opportunity to strengthen your bond with them before introducing new energy into the home. When you do eventually bring home a puppy, your existing pets will be more emotionally stable and better able to accept and guide a new member of the pack.

When the Time *Is* Right

There will come a moment—whether in a few weeks, months, or even years—when your heart feels open again. Not because you've "moved on," but because grief has transformed into gratitude, and the space that once hurt so much becomes a place you can now share again. When you reach that point, the joy of a new puppy won't feel like a replacement. It will feel like an expansion of love.

Many families who choose to wait tell me they're ultimately glad they did. They bring home their puppy with a sense of peace rather than urgency—with hearts ready to love again in a new way, not just desperate to stop the pain. That intentionality is a gift to you, to your future dog, and to the memory of the one you lost.

You Don't Have to Decide Alone

As a breeder, my job is not just to place puppies—it's to support families through every part of the journey. I'm always happy to talk through your questions, your timeline, or just hold space for your grief. If now isn't the right time, that's okay. When you're ready—whether that's in a few months or a few years—I'll still be here. There is no pressure, no timeline, and no judgment—only compassion, and the hope that, when the time is right, the next chapter will bring light and joy back into your life.