



Veterinary Wisdom[®]

for pet parents

ClayPaws[®] Prints are Cherished Links to Pets

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When my favorite cat Chelsea died, I spent an entire day wandering around my home, searching for a special item that would help me feel close to her. I finally zeroed in on a night light decorated with a red glass heart. When it was lit, the warm glow reminded me of my sweet kitty who had slept curled beside me under the covers every night of her life.

Chelsea died many years ago, before ClayPaws[®] prints were even created. Though I still use my red heart night light, I'd love to have a print of Chelsea's paw to "link" me to her in a way that's real and personal.

A ClayPaws[®] print is what grief experts call a "linking object". A linking object is any physical item or image that connects you in a comforting way to a pet who has recently died. The *right* linking object can help you stay focused on positive memories and remind you that the love of a pet never really dies.

Yet, finding a suitable linking object can be tricky.



ClayPaws[®] Kits can be purchased from World by the Tail, Inc.

instance, it's important to choose an object that helps you deal with the *reality* of loss, rather than something that perpetuates any *denial* that loss has occurred. This is why body care options that allow you to keep a life-size replica of your pet (freeze drying, taxidermy) are not usually encouraged by grief experts.

A logical choice for a linking object might be something that belonged to your pet, like a collar, a toy mouse, a bed, a special blanket, or even a food or water dish. Or, the object might be part of the actual animal, such as one of your bird's feathers, a clipping of your dog's fur, the wool of your llama, or part of your horse's mane or tail. Linking objects like these promote healthy bonds with deceased pets. Meaningful links to a beloved pet can ease the pain of grief and help continue the bond you shared with your companion animal.

Once you've chosen a link, there's nothing 'morbid' about keeping the item with you or displaying it in plain view. Too often, pet parents are advised to get rid of the things that belonged to their pets to prevent you from being constantly reminded of your loss. However, research and clinical experience proves you may feel tremendous regret if you discard reminders of your pet too quickly. Trust your gut and do what's right for you.

During my time in clinical practice, I had clients who carried clips of their pets' fur in their pockets, wore their dogs' tags as jewelry, or even slept with their cats' favorite toys or whiskers under their pillows. And, of course, many received ClayPaws[®] prints from their caring veterinarians, rewarding the thoughtful gesture with unwavering feelings of gratitude and loyalty.

A ClayPaws[®] print may be the ideal linking object. A paw print is as individual as a human fingerprint. The size, bumps, claw marks, and indentations represent the intimate connection you shared with your special pet. Each ClayPaws[®] print is a lasting keepsake that's handmade and can't be mass produced. This alone makes it a keepsake that is valuable beyond measure.