

This is a book that explores the inner world of bonding with dogs and saying goodbye to them when their time comes. There are stories of the author's relationships with the last two dogs in her life, and their deaths. She writes about how she experienced the grief of each loss and ways she found to help her move through the grieving process.

TWO DOGS, TWO GRIEFS

by Debra J. Bilton

Order the complete book from the publisher [Booklocker.com](https://www.booklocker.com)

<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/10773.html?s=pdf>

or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.



*Two Dogs,
Two Grievs*

Debra J. Bilton

Copyright © 2019 Debra J. Bilton

ISBN: 978-1-64718-140-6

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida.

Printed on acid-free paper.

Booklocker.com, Inc.
2019

Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Farley..... | 3 |
| The One | 3 |
| Farley and the Fear..... | 4 |
| More Steep Learning Curves | 5 |
| The Gazelle | 6 |
| The Red Rocket..... | 8 |
| Bunnies and a Soft Mouth..... | 9 |
| Dogs and Energy | 10 |
| Birds, Too..... | 11 |
| Farley and Toby | 13 |
| Becoming a Towny Dog | 13 |
| Co-Pilot | 14 |
| And Then There Were Two | 15 |
| Problems?..... | 16 |
| Unknown Origins | 16 |
| Taming of the Wild Thing..... | 17 |
| Camping: Good For One, Not the Other | 19 |
| Crate and Rotate..... | 20 |
| Mama Bear | 21 |
| Fred | 23 |
| The Ravages of Time..... | 27 |
| Do You See What You See? | 27 |
| Some Things Get Harder With Age..... | 28 |
| Bucket List | 29 |
| An Unexpected Ending | 29 |
| Toby..... | 35 |
| An Old Dog New in My Life | 35 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| The Dog Next Door | 35 |
| The Plan | 37 |
| Car Rides and Walks! | 37 |
| Progress..... | 39 |
| The Wonder of Gas Stations? | 39 |
| Familiar But New..... | 40 |
| Health Problems..... | 41 |
| Prey Drive | 42 |
| A Change in Sleeping Arrangements..... | 43 |
| Degenerative Myelopathy..... | 44 |
| Harmony With Another Dog | 45 |
| A Natural Death | 47 |
| Nothing Left to Give..... | 47 |
| Yes or No? | 48 |
| Home Again..... | 50 |
| Give Him the Best..... | 50 |
| Go Pee..... | 51 |
| Turning and a Turn | 52 |
| Support..... | 53 |
| Two Dogs, More Than One Grief..... | 55 |
| The Different Types of Grief I Experienced..... | 55 |
| Disenfranchised Grief..... | 55 |
| Complicated Grief..... | 56 |
| Anniversary Grief..... | 57 |
| Anticipatory Grief..... | 57 |
| Normal Grief..... | 57 |
| Factors and Circumstances That Affected My Grief..... | 58 |
| Bonding..... | 58 |
| Emotional Investment..... | 58 |
| Unexpected Versus Gradual Death..... | 58 |
| The Veterinarian | 59 |
| Euthanasia Verses a Natural Death..... | 59 |
| Veterinary Support..... | 59 |
| Experience With Grieving | 60 |
| Private Versus Public Grief | 60 |
| Things That Helped Me While Grieving | 60 |

TWO DOGS, TWO GRIEFS

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Talking About it With Others | 60 |
| Journaling or Writing | 60 |
| Spirit Walks..... | 61 |
| Music..... | 61 |
| Connecting With Your Spirit or Spirituality | 61 |
| The Surge of Yang Energy..... | 62 |
| Afterward..... | 65 |
| Perfect Storm..... | 65 |
| The Animals | 66 |
| Cooper | 70 |
| About the Author | 73 |

Introduction

In just under six years, I lost two beloved dogs. The first, Farley, was my heart and soul in a canine body. The second was Toby. Each of their deaths changed me. Hence, the reason for my writing this book. My hope was to learn why I grieved the loss of each so differently so that I can find meaning in their deaths and become a better person for it.

Throughout my lifetime I have, for the most part unconsciously, worked on processing my emotions to understand why I think and feel the way I do. A few years ago, my best friend asked me why I kept remembering and talking about difficult and sometimes traumatic events from the past. I paused to think about this, then replied, "I need to understand why they happened so that I can let them go."

This is how I learn my life lessons. I'm not always good at dealing with my emotions during the experience. I tend to push them down. I know this is not healthy and over time they demand your attention. When this happens, I look back to the event and break it down. I look at the details from different angles and perspectives. Inevitably I have an AHA moment where everything comes together and I understand what I was meant to learn. Then I can let it go and not carry the emotional burden anymore.

Farley's death almost broke me. I had never experienced such pain and loss. I was unprepared to deal with it. After almost six years, it took the death of Toby to help me finish grieving the loss of Farley. And for that, I am grateful to Toby.

When I told people that Toby had died, many had tears in their eyes and some cried. Although I had lost Toby, it was I who hugged and consoled them. I realized that many people who have lost their pets have not completely grieved their loss. Basically, people suck at

grieving the loss of a pet. I know I did with Farley. It was different with Toby. The circumstances and the way he died were different.

When Farley died, I searched the internet for resources to help me through the grieving process. I found very little that helped. After Toby died, I found more useful resources, but not exactly what I needed. Hopefully what I have written here will be of use to someone who is grieving the loss of their pet.

Farley

The One

I wasn't sure how to start the story of my life with Farley. He was with me for just over fourteen years. He was the third dog in my life. And regardless of how many dogs you have, there is always that one, the one that touches your heart so deeply that you didn't know you could love a dog so much. For me, Farley was and always will be, the one.

Oddly enough, he started out as the dog I never wanted in my life. I wasn't looking forward to the puppy coming into the house. I had a fear of dogs since childhood, that I would push down and then it would rear its ugly head again and again, for many years. There were some periods where it reached the level of a phobia. I dealt with it as best as I could, but it limited my life in so many ways. I guess the universe gives us what we need when we're ready for it.

He was so small. I hadn't been around a puppy in years. He was also the first dog we had who lived inside the house. There were a lot of firsts with Farley, which was a steep learning curve for me. Dog training resources were not plentiful back then. I found a book at the local library that was written by Barbara Woodhouse. This is where I learned how to crate and potty train a puppy. I also think that her book is what started me on the journey of learning about dogs and how to work with them.

His crate was in the kitchen. That's where he slept at night, alone. At first, he would cry and whine when he woke up through the night. I couldn't lie in bed listening to him. It tore at my heartstrings. I'd read or heard somewhere that an animal will not do its business where it sleeps. Farley proved that this was not true.

When I'd go out to him, his bedding was sopped with urine, every single time. I'd take him out of his crate, clean him, replace his bedding, and then try to get him to sleep. I found that holding him against my heart while rocking and chanting Buddhist prayers and sutras worked the best. I'd wait until he was sound asleep to put him back into his crate. If I did it too soon, he would wake and cry, and the process would start again. Eventually, he slept through the night.

Farley and the Fear

I was teaching my classes four nights a week and working double shifts every weekend at the racetrack. Everyone else in the house worked full-time days. I spent my days with Farley. This was a new experience for me. It was also difficult for me because of my fear of dogs. Most of the time I could rationalize the fear away, but emotions are irrational. They come when they want and keep doing so until you deal with them.

I clearly remember standing inside the back patio door. I looked at Farley, and something about seeing his face in profile triggered my fear. This visual must have been similar to a memory I had of the incident in my childhood that created my fear. For some reason, I knew this time was different. I'd always felt a general fear in the past, but this time I made a specific connection to a picture in my mind. Something inside of me told me to let the fear rise, and I did. I felt the fear in every cell of my body, the discomfort, and dread. After I'd experienced it completely, it left me. The new space created in my mind was gradually filled with my love for Farley.

Throughout this experience, Farley stood quietly and patiently beside me. In the past, I'd had dogs try to attack me when they sensed my fear. Not Farley. He waited. I didn't have a perception of time during this. It was like a meditation when you enter timeless time. There's no time or space. Just being. When it was done we went outside and continued on with our day.

Looking back I see that Farley was a therapy dog for me. And this happened years before I'd heard of this term. What he gave me that day

was a gift and I am grateful to him. Years later I was able to give this gift to another dog. I paid it forward.

More Steep Learning Curves

I had so many new experiences with Farley. I learned about the importance of confining a puppy to the back seat of the car while I was driving. I really didn't understand the inquisitive nature of puppies and their lack of knowledge about the world. I was naive. The first time I had Farley in the car with me I was shocked when he crawled under my legs and was entwined with my feet while I was driving. Somehow I got him out and ended up holding him against me with one arm. Our first car ride was a disaster. We both made it home safe and sound, and I knew I needed to change this arrangement.

When I don't understand something or lack knowledge, I research a topic to the point of becoming a semi-expert. I need to find answers to all of my questions. I guess my mind is like an inquisitive puppy. After reading a lot of information online, I decided that Farley needed a harness and I needed the attachment where one end clicked into the seat belt attachment and the other clipped onto the harness. He would be tethered into the back seat. This would give him a free rein of movement in the back seat and keep him from getting underfoot, literally.

Now the search was on. I went to several pet supply stores and found that this was not a popular item at the time. I went into the store at the mall and asked the woman working there if they sold this product. She said yes and then proceeded to tell me a story told to her by another customer.

The customer had recently bought the attachment to secure her large German Shepherd in the back of her car. She had a serious accident while driving and fortunately she and the dog were not injured. The police officer told her that it was a good thing she had her dog tethered in the back of the car. Otherwise, the impact of the accident would have thrown the dog forward. The forward motion, combined with the dog's weight, would have thrown him and her

through the front windshield. This was the confirmation I needed. I bought the attachment with peace of mind.

My having all the right equipment wasn't a guarantee that I would use them correctly. I'd read that socializing puppies was really important, so I decided to take Farley to the church where I taught some of my classes. I'd called the secretary beforehand and she was looking forward to our visit. Once again, I didn't have a lot of knowledge about puppies and I was not using my logical reasoning skills on this day. I got out of the car, opened the rear door on the driver's side and unclipped the tether from Farley's harness. I should have clipped the leash onto his collar or harness before unclipping the tether. Here was a little, curious, energy-filled puppy with nothing attached to him. He was a free agent in the world.

I was shocked when he bounded out of the car and into the parking lot. To say that I felt panic was an understatement. He was so young he didn't know his name yet and wasn't trained for recall. And there were four lanes of traffic beside the church. I didn't want to run toward him in case it scared him or he thought I was playing and then ran away. I slowly walked toward him and talked to him in a calm voice. I only had seconds to get to him and I knew he could run faster than me.

And then a miracle happened. He stopped to sniff a worm in a puddle in the middle of the parking lot. All of his attention was focused on this little worm. Farley didn't even notice that I clipped the leash on him. The crisis was averted. I was so grateful to that little worm. And the secretary loved meeting Farley.

The Gazelle

As Farley got older, he was allowed to be unsupervised in the fenced backyard. I knew he was safe out there and it gave him time to explore and just be a dog. A new water well was being drilled in the backyard. The work crew had taken down one section of the fence and temporarily replaced it with a piece of snow fencing. This allowed them easy access to the backyard with their heavy equipment. They weren't there that day, so I let Farley out. Never underestimate the curiosity of a young dog. It's always best to think two steps ahead of

them. The snow fence was new and different. It probably carried the scent of the men who put it up. Of course, this would need to be thoroughly investigated by a scent oriented animal.

After a while, I went out to check on Farley. I didn't see him so I called his name and waited. No Farley. That was unusual. Unless he was around the other side of the back of the house where he couldn't hear me or was distracted. I started to walk in that direction when I caught movement out of the corner of my left eye. I turned to see one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen in my life.

Two doors down, a dog was running in an empty field. I have never seen a dog so happy. Its front legs would stretch to reach their limit before barely touching the ground and the hind legs would quickly follow. It was a full out run using its body movements to the extreme. It was like watching a gazelle on an episode of the Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom. I stood still for seconds, entranced by what I saw.

And then it hit me. That wasn't a dog, it was Farley. He must have jumped on the snow fence and not being sturdy it gave way and created an escape route for him. The fence was now in an upright position so it must have snapped back into place after he'd pushed it down. I opened the gate and started running toward the end of the field he was running in. This end was closest to the highway. I thought I could head him off at the pass.

He saw me as I was halfway to my intended destination. He stopped and looked at me. I could tell that he was wondering if he was in trouble. I didn't want him to run, especially with three lanes of traffic on the highway. I decided to make a game of it. I used my happy, hey buddy voice and motioned for him to come to me. He hesitated, and I continued. I wanted him to know that coming to me was a good thing. I needed for him to make that association. And it worked. He ran to me as fast as he could. I took hold of his collar and told him what a good boy he was. I kept praising him all the way home. After that, his backyard jaunts were supervised until the regular fence was reinstalled.

The Red Rocket

Farley could run like the wind. His speed and grace astounded me. And the sheer joy that emanated from him filled me with awe and wonder. He was a reddish, brown blur as he raced around the backyard. He always ran the same route, up the side of the hill by the compost pile, across the top along the fence of the farmer's field, leaping down the side where the grapevines grew, and across the flat lawn at the bottom of the hill. He would complete this circuit over and over until he wore himself out.

I learned the hard way to not move when he ran by me. He could perfectly gauge how close he could get to me as he whizzed by and not make contact with me. I think it was a game for him. If I moved a fraction of an inch on his way by, he would smack into my legs. Sometimes it was just a graze, and other times it was a collision. It was difficult to stand still while watching him run toward me. I curbed my natural instinct to move for self-preservation. Over time, I came to trust his accuracy. He never made the slightest contact with me if I remained still.

Since he enjoyed running so much, I tried to play fetch with him. Unfortunately, he had a mind of his own and we played by his rules. I would throw the ball and he'd chase after it. He'd pick it up off the ground and come running back to me. I tried to teach him to give it to me, but that usually ended in a tug of war over the ball. Then I taught him to drop it. This worked well when he wanted to play. When he came running back to me with the ball, he would drop it beside me and keep running. Then he'd wait until I threw it again.

When he was done playing he would pick up the ball, go as far away from me as he could get, and then drop it. I could tell him to bring it back to me until I was blue in the face. No amount of coaxing or cajoling would entice him to play after that. When he was done, he was done.

And the best running story was told over and over by my father. He was in the backyard and saw Farley chasing a rabbit across the top of the back hill. Farley must have bit the rabbit because it squealed. Then

he saw them both airborne as they launched from the top of the hill. The rabbit got away and Farley had enjoyed the chase.

Bunnies and a Soft Mouth

The next day, Farley and I were walking in the backyard. He sniffed something at the bottom of the hill and then picked it up in his mouth. He didn't bite it or eat it. He very gently picked it up in his mouth. I told him to drop it and he did. I crouched down to get a closer look at the object. It was a baby rabbit. It was so young that it couldn't move much on its own yet. I looked up and saw the rabbit's nest halfway up the hill. The baby must have somehow fallen out and rolled down the hill.

I remembered hearing that you should not get your scent on a baby animal or the mother would reject it. I used the bottom of my shirt to pick it up and I gently placed it back into the nest with the other babies. Farley had come with me. I told him to leave the baby bunnies alone, and he did. He stayed a few feet back from the nest.

I made the connection that the rabbit Farley had chased was the mother. I was concerned that she was too injured to come back to her nest, or worse, she was dead. I found the phone number for a wildlife rescue group. I called to ask their advice on what to do to save the baby rabbits. I was surprised when the woman I talked to said that if the babies were still alive, then the mother was coming to care for them when no one was around. She must have cared for them at night because I never saw her during the day.

Every morning, Farley and I would go out and check on the bunnies. I reminded him to leave them alone. I would stand at the bottom of the hill while he walked a wide circle around the nest. He would sniff around but not get too close to the nest.

Then one morning we went to check the nest, and it was empty, except for one little rabbit that was dead. I'll never know if another animal got them, or if the mother was able to take most of them away. I hoped for the latter.

Dogs and Energy

Reiki is a Japanese term that means life force energy, or energy of the soul. All living creatures have ki or qi, which is the energy that moves through us. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, this energy moves through pathways known as meridians. If this energy is moving as it should, we have good health. If it is sluggish or blocked, we have ill health. Reiki is a method of healing that balances the energy of the body. An imbalance of energy can result in illness or be the result of injury.

I've shared Reiki with people and animals. I find that animals are more sensitive to it and are very honest in showing their need for it, especially dogs. If a dog is healthy and you try to give them Reiki, they will get up, give you the stink eye and walk away. That's honesty. If they are ill or injured, they will lie there and sleep until they have received enough energy to help them.

There was a partial fence at the top of the hill that was originally intended to be a part of a pen for Farley to live in. He ended up living indoors with us. One winter day, I was out back with him. He was doing his red rocket run and then I heard him yelp. He must have slipped on the snow or ice and hit his right hip against one of the fence posts. I ran up the hill to get to him. I knew it was bad because he wouldn't walk on his own and his whole body was trembling. I was worried he was going into shock.

I finally coaxed him down to the bottom of the hill. When we got there, he laid down with his injured hip on the snow. As soon as I saw him do this, I knew he was easing his pain with the coldness of the snow. It was the same as people using an ice pack on an injury. This would also reduce any swelling. Animals are so smart. I stayed with him until he was able to get up and walk again.

We went inside and he laid on the living room carpet with his injured hip exposed. I sat with my legs on either side of his body and proceeded to give him Reiki. His hip was so warm to the touch and it radiated energy. This told me he had injured it badly. I gave him Reiki for about half an hour and visualized cooling the affected area with the

element of water. Then I used the white light to heal the area. He had a deep, restful sleep after that. Then he was fine.

There were times I would try to give Reiki to Farley when he was curled up, sound asleep in his bed. There was nothing wrong with him. I was curious to see how he would respond. His reaction was the same every time. He would wake up and give me a look that let me know he was not impressed. Then he would get up, walk into another room and lie down. He just wanted to get away from me so he could sleep in peace.

These little experiments taught me that animals have an innate sense of this energy. They know when they're energy bodies are balanced, and they know when they're not.

Birds, Too

I have also given Reiki to birds. Hey, I'll share the energy with any living being that needs and will benefit from it. Years ago we had a budgie that had a stroke. I can't remember its name because we had so many budgies over the years. One morning I found him at the bottom of his cage. He was alive but couldn't move. I suspected he had a stroke, as most budgies do as they near the end of their life. I gave him Reiki and after a few minutes he started moving. Shortly after that, he was back to his normal self. He lived for another two months.

Years later I tried the same thing with another budgie, Sparks, but wasn't able to help her. I came home from work one night and found her lying on the bottom of her cage. I gave her Reiki over and over again. Then I accepted that this would not help her. The stroke must have caused too much damage to her brain.

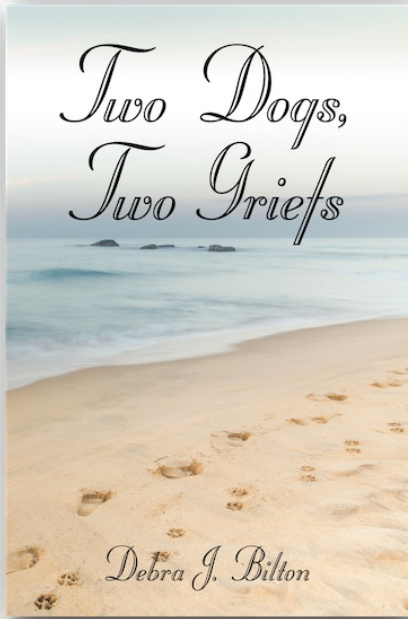
I remember her being very friendly after her stroke. Prior to that, she was content to be in her cage all the time. After the stroke, she wanted to be with me all the time when I was home. So, I carried her around in my hand when I went through the house.

I had to make disability-related accommodations to her cage for when I was at work. She couldn't get up to her regular water and food dishes. And if I placed them on the floor of her cage, she still couldn't

reach them. I tried different types of small dishes and bowls but they weren't the right height and weight.

I needed a water dish that was high enough for her to lean her head into to drink from it, but not so low that she would fall into it and drown. The food dish needed to be low enough for her to lean her head into to eat, and heavy enough to not tip over and onto her when she leaned into it with her body weight. Thank goodness for dollar stores. I found two square, shallow, porcelain dishes that met these conditions.

When I was home, I made a nest out of an old sweatshirt and put it on the bed beside me. She would sleep in it or in the curve of my neck while I read or worked on the computer. At night, she slept in the sweatshirt nest beside me. She lived for a couple of weeks after her stroke.



This is a book that explores the inner world of bonding with dogs and saying goodbye to them when their time comes. There are stories of the author's relationships with the last two dogs in her life, and their deaths. She writes about how she experienced the grief of each loss and ways she found to help her move through the grieving process.

TWO DOGS, TWO GRIEFS

by Debra J. Bilton

Order the complete book from the publisher [Booklocker.com](https://www.booklocker.com)

<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/10773.html?s=pdf>

or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.