



Media Release

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Tragic Death of Dog in Gorge Prompts Discussion Safety vs. Freedom

People are talking about the delicate balance between safety and freedom for our animals after the heartbreaking death of Casey, who fell during a hike on the Angel's Rest trail.

DoveLewis grief counselor, Enid Traisman, MSW, has helped thousands of people navigate the loss of a companion animal. She understands the internal struggle facing pet parents. They walk a very thin line between allowing their beloved friends to enjoy some craved freedom and protecting them from a long list of 'what ifs.' Cats who roam free in the yard can jump fences. Dogs released from the confines of their leashes can run into traffic.

Owners whose pets suffer the consequences are left not only without their cherished friends, but also with a heavy dose of guilt, remorse, and self-loathing.

Traisman has listened to many tragic stories. As director of DoveLewis' Pet Loss Support program, Enid helps hundreds of people every year navigate the

debilitating loss of a companion animal. In cases of accidents that involved decisions made by the owner him or herself, the accompanying guilt is as powerful as the grief at the loss.

"Our guilt is intensified by the profound sense of responsibility we feel toward our pets. We can not expect our pets to understand why they shouldn't run into the street, or eat something that will harm them. We are their guardians and protectors so if there's an accident, we see ourselves as responsible for "that" too," says Traisman. *"Don't let guilt keep you locked in a lifetime of misery. Choose to understand what led up to your choices, learn from your actions and work towards forgiving yourself so that you can move forward, heal and love again."*

Traisman offers tips for pet owners who walk that line between safety and freedom for their pets: **(more)**

DoveLewis is Portland's 24-Hour Emergency and ICU Animal Hospital, offering advanced veterinary care in a state-of-the-art facility in Northwest Portland. DoveLewis also shares several 100% donor-funded programs with the community including one of America's largest volunteer-based animal blood banks, an award-winning animal assisted therapy program, a nationally recognized pet loss support program offering five free group therapy sessions each month, 24-hour stabilizing care for lost, stray and wild animals and financial assistance for low income families and owners of abused pets.

DOVELEWIS FREE PET LOSS SUPPORT GROUP SESSIONS

NW Hospital: 1945 NW Pettygrove, Portland

1st Thursday 12:00pm

2nd Thursday 9:00am

3rd Monday 7:00pm

3rd Thursday 7:00pm

SE Hospital; 10564 SE Washington/Plaza 205

3rd Wednesday 7:00pm

Enid Traisman/ 24 hours: 503.234.2061

"It is a personal dilemma for each of us as pet guardians to balance the freedom vs. safety issue. As the grief counselor who hears the anguish of the people who erred on the side of freedom which resulted in tragic death, I ache for them knowing how much they loved and cherished their pets and were only wanting their pets to be fully happy....

As the guardian of two active dogs I also understand that running off leash at the park makes my dogs happier than anything.... But is it worth it? It seems worth it unless (until) the unthinkable actually happens.

Search for the balance. Choose the park that has an enclosed dog area. If you believe that cats are happy only if they can go outside, build an enclosure to keep them safe from cars and dogs. It is worth it to be creative to find that balance, that sweet spot.

I believe and I tell people that they make the best choices they can based on the information they have at the time. The risks are weighed and choices are made, I don't believe any of us who are animal lovers would purposely put our beloved pets in harm's way."

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