

HOW WILL I KNOW?

BY DR. HEIDI PULITO



HOW WILL I KNOW?

IS IT TIME?

WHAT IS QUALITY OF LIFE?

HOW DO I PLAN FOR THIS?

WHAT IS A GOOD DAY VS
BAD DAY?

IN THIS BOOK


03 **WHAT IS QUALITY OF
LIFE?**

04 **QUALITY OF LIFE
FACTORS**

08 **HOW CAN WE HELP?**

10 **HELPFUL RESOURCES**





WHAT IS QUALITY OF LIFE?

QUALITY OF LIFE



If you struggle with assessing quality of life in your pet, let me assure you that you are not alone! This is one of the biggest challenges of having a pet. Quality of life describes the current physical and mental status of a pet. In cases of sudden illness or trauma, quality of life can sometimes be easier to assess. For instance, if a pet is struggling to breathe and was just diagnosed with widespread cancer, quality of life is considered poor and choosing euthanasia is a compassionate decision.

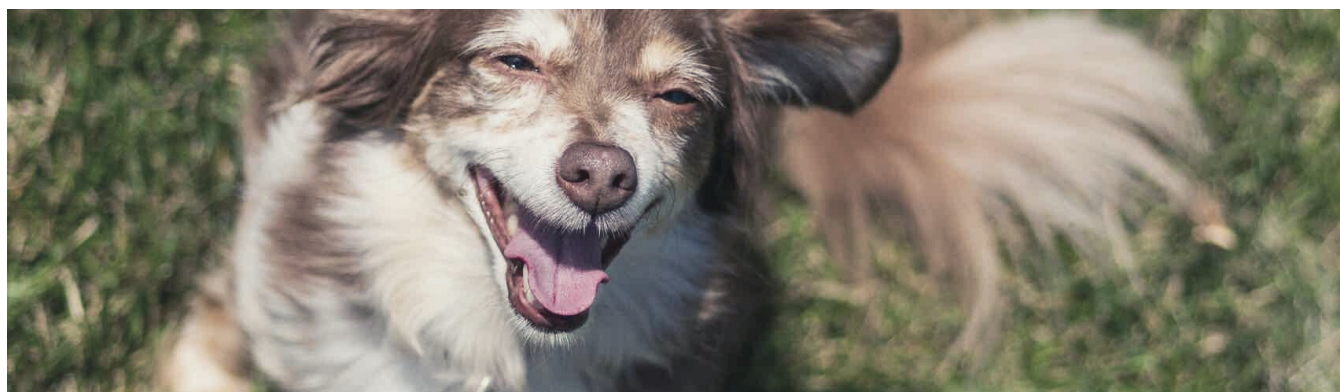
However, I find that most pets fall into the grey zone. They are having some issues, but other areas of their life are fine. This makes it very difficult for families to decide what type of quality of life their pet has. In fact, it will likely vary from day to day. This is where you should take into consideration multiple factors which I will describe next. If you are noticing changes or declines in many of the following, then your pet's quality of life may be diminishing. And after reading this book you are still unsure, call us and schedule a Quality of Life Exam. We can walk you through these areas and help you interpret your pet's quality of life.

APPETITE

Is your pet starting to have changes in eating such as eating less, not wanting normal treats, or not eating at all? (It is important to know that some pets (especially Labradors!) never stop eating no matter what, but they may have issues in the other factors that point towards a poor quality of life).

MOBILITY

Is your pet able to move around on their own or do they require constant assistance? As pets age, arthritis among other diseases can make it difficult for our pets to move around. It can also become dangerous if they are unstable and fall in hazardous conditions or down stairs.



PAIN

Does your pet appear to be in pain? This can be really hard to determine but some signs that a pet may be in pain include: whining, panting, restlessness, shying away from touch, new found aggression, not wanting to move, and licking at certain areas on the body.

FAVORITE THINGS

It is normal for older pets to slow down in activity, but they should still get excited by some of their favorite toys, treats, activities, or humans. Are they not showing any response to some of their favorite things?

SOCIALABILITY

Is your pet hiding or more reclusive?

Instinct will sometimes drive a pet to distance himself from other beings when they are close to death. This can also be a sign of discomfort if they are hiding to avoid touch that may be painful.

HYGIENE

Is your pet unable to control normal bodily functions and as a result requires more bathing and cleaning? Are they unable to move away after they soil themselves?

Issues in hygiene can lead to pressure sores and skin infections that add to overall discomfort.



"THE LOOK"

There are some pets, not all, whose faces change, the lights in their eyes dim, and they give off a tired look that means they are near the end. Are you seeing this tired look in your pet's eyes?

GOOD VS BAD DAYS

Is your pet starting to have more bad days than good? What is a good day for your pet versus a bad day? Keeping a log of good versus bad days on the calendar will help you to see quality of life declining if more bad days are occurring in a week than good.

**IF YOUR PET IS
EXPERIENCING A
DECLINE IN A FEW
OF THESE AREAS,
CHANCES ARE
QUALITY OF LIFE IS
A CONCERN AND
YOU NEED TO TALK
TO YOUR
VETERINARIAN
ABOUT YOUR
OPTIONS**



WHAT ABOUT YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE?

We LOVE older pets! However, we cannot deny that caring for an older pet, especially one with multiple health issues, comes with its challenges. This can be time consuming, physically demanding, mentally straining, as well as expensive. It is ok to admit to these truths. Many families feel guilty about feeling this way, and we want you to know that in order for your pet to be taken care of, you need to care for yourself. It is wise to consider your quality of life and ability to provide for your pet when looking at the overall picture of quality of life.



Unleashed
with Grace

THE QUALITY OF LIFE HOME EXAM

Let our expertise serve you and your pet during this challenging time. A quality of life exam is an hour long consultation plus physical examination of your pet performed in your home. Our doctor will discuss quality of life in depth with your family and let you know how your pet is doing. She will also point out key factors you should watch for and what to expect as disease progresses. You will have plenty of time to ask all your questions in the privacy of your own home.

What does it NOT include? A quality of life examination does not include us taking over your pet's care. Therefore, your pet will stay under the care of your primary veterinarian. No medications will be prescribed or changed. Instead, you will feel equipped and encouraged on how to assess your pet's quality of life and will better understand the disease process your pet is experiencing. It also allows you to meet our doctor and feel more comfortable if you do choose a home euthanasia through us. We can certainly answer all questions concerning that process at that time as well.



WHY PLANNING AHEAD IS SO IMPORTANT

PLANNING AHEAD



It may feel strange and uncomfortable to consider quality of life and plan for a home euthanasia. We want you to know these feelings are normal. This is an extremely difficult time that you are facing. However, planning ahead to know the time and way that you would prefer your pet to pass honors the bond and the love that you share. You are reading this because you adore your pet and want to do right by them. And you are! The biggest fears that we hear from pet families is that they will wait too long and end up having to put down their pet at the emergency clinic.

We want to help you avoid your greatest fears and let your pet pass in the most graceful way. Please reach out to us with any questions you have. We are here to help you be the hero that your pet knows you are!



LINKS TO QUALITY OF LIFE TOOLS

PRINTABLE QUALITY OF LIFE HOME ASSESSMENT

Click above to download a quality of life quiz you can take at home with your family.

THE GREY MUZZLE APP

Click above to learn more about a free app that allows you to track good vs bad days. It even lets you take pictures so you can compare week after week how your pet may be changing.

SCHEDULE A QUALITY OF LIFE EXAMINATION

Click above to return to our website to call/text or email us to schedule an exam.



LET US HELP YOU
BRING LIGHT AND
GRACE INTO THEIR
LAST MOMENTS

Unleashed
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