

- This is your Journey -

Untethered Paws

May 5, 2026

R-U-Ok? Grief Workbook



A 20-page guided journal through the 5 steps of the R-U-Ok? Grief Framework

For those grieving a senior dog or service dog

Created by someone who lost Miko (2009-2025 • 16 years) and Jiraiya (2011-2026 • 15 years)

Untethered Paws

"Grieving is a journey. Do it your way."

Welcome, friend.

You are holding this workbook because you are hurting. I am not here to fix that. I am here to walk with you.

This workbook is based on the R-U-Ok? framework — 5 steps that helped me survive losing both my service dogs in 11 months.

R – Acknowledge your pain

U – Unfold / Express your feelings

O – Organize / Reinvent your routine

K – Kindness / Seek support

? – Re-connect with community in your way

You do not have to do these in order. You do not have to finish in a week. Go as slow as you need. Use a pen. Cry on the pages. Skip what does not fit.

This is your journey. This is your way.

You are not alone tonight.

— Untethered Paws

How to Use This Workbook

What you will need:

- A pen or pencil
- 10-15 minutes of quiet time
- Permission to be honest

Suggestions:

- Write without judging yourself
- Skip any page that feels too hard
- Come back days or weeks later
- Use color, doodles, or tears — all welcome

Each step has:

- A reflection page (thinking)
- A writing prompt (feeling)
- A small action (doing)

There is no wrong way to complete this workbook.

Step R – Acknowledge Your Pain

Reflection

Before you write, sit with these questions:

What does grief feel like in your body right now?

(Example: tight chest, heavy shoulders, empty stomach)

What words would you use to describe your grief?

(Example: heavy, quiet, loud, confusing, numb)

When was the last time you said "I am grieving" out loud?

Step R – Writing Prompt

Write a letter to yourself about your grief. Start with:

"I am grieving because..."

Now say it out loud: "I am grieving. That is real. That is allowed."

How did that feel? Write one word:

Step R – Small Action

Choose one small action today:

- Say "I am grieving" to yourself in the mirror
- Write it on a sticky note and put it on your fridge
- Text one person: "I am not okay today. You do not need to fix it."
- Say it out loud in the car, alone

What did you choose? _____

After you do it, write how it felt:

Step U – Unfold / Express Your Feelings

Reflection

How have you been expressing your grief so far?

What do you need to let out that you have been holding in?

What is one feeling you are afraid to feel?

Step U – Writing Prompt

Write a letter to your pet. Tell them what you did not get to say.

Dear _____,

I miss you. I love you. I am trying.

Love,

Step U – Small Action

Choose one way to express your grief today:

- Cry. Let it out. Loud or soft — both count.
- Light a candle in their memory
- Play a song that makes you cry (on purpose)
- Talk to their photo out loud
- Scream into a pillow

What did you choose? _____

After you do it, write how it felt:

Step O – Organize / Reinvent Your Routine

Reflection

What did your morning routine look like before your loss?

What does it look like now?

What is one small thing you could add or change tomorrow?

Step O – Writing Prompt

Describe your perfect gentle morning — tiny, realistic, kind.

When I wake up, I will:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Example: Drink a glass of water. Sit outside for 2 minutes. Light a candle.

What is the smallest step you can take tomorrow?

Step O – Small Action

Choose one anchor for tomorrow morning:

- Glass of water by your bed — drink it when you wake up
- One alarm to remind you to eat something
- Sit outside for 3 minutes (crying allowed)
- Make your bed (tiny win)
- Light a candle where their bed used to be

What did you choose? _____

After you do it, write how it felt:

Step K – Kindness / Seek Support

Reflection

Have you asked anyone for help since your loss?

What stops you from reaching out?

(Example: fear of being a burden, pride, not knowing what to say)

Who is one person you trust?

Step K – Writing Prompt

Write the text message you could send to someone you trust.

"Hi [name], I am struggling today. You do not need to fix it. Can you just sit with me for 20 minutes? Or text back a heart?"

Or write what you wish someone would say to you:

Step K – Small Action

Choose one small reach today:

- Send that text (or save it for tomorrow)
- Call a pet loss hotline (APLB: free, anonymous)
- Post in a grief group (just one sentence)
- Put your hand on your chest and say: "I deserve support"

What did you choose? _____

After you do it, write how it felt:

Step ? – Re-Connect with Community

Reflection

Read the 5 levels of connection:

1. Silent witness – You read. You never post. That is enough.
2. Occasional visitor – You like. You comment sometimes.
3. Active participant – You share your story. You support others.
4. Community anchor – You welcome new members.
5. Creator – You build something from your grief.

What level are you at today?

Do you want to change levels? Why or why not?

Step ? – Writing Prompt

Write about what community means to you right now.

I feel most connected when...

I feel most alone when...

One small way I could feel less alone is...

Step ? – Small Action

Choose one way to connect today — at your level:

- Read one post in a grief group (just read)
- Like or heart someone else's comment
- Comment one sentence: "I see you."
- Share one photo of your pet (no words needed)
- Start a new thread: "Today I am struggling with..."

What did you choose? _____

After you do it, write how it felt:

My Grief Toolkit

What helps me? What does not?

Things that bring me comfort:

Things that make grief harder:

One person I can text when I am drowning:

One song that lets me cry:

One small ritual I will keep:

One thing I want to remember about my pet:

You made it through 20 pages.

That is not small. That is brave.

You do not have to be okay today. But you are not alone.

Come back to this workbook anytime. Skip around. Write in the margins. Tear out a page if you need to.

Miko and Jiraiya are still working. They are just working through you now.

With love and paws,

— Natalie Schuster

Untethered Paws

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