

Medical Radiation Science Narratives

Mental wellness: The Jasper and Alice way

Gerhardus George Visser Koch

Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Department of Medical Imaging and Therapeutic Sciences, Cape Town, South Africa

Gerhardus George Visser Koch, also known as Erhard, is a qualified, independent practice, diagnostic radiographer from South Africa. Erhard's work experience ranges from having occupied various positions in both the public and private healthcare sectors. He has a passion for academia and research, currently occupying the role of a lecturer in diagnostic radiography. Erhard has a keen interest in radiation protection, health professions education, professional role extension and artificial intelligence. He loves animals, enjoys spending time in nature, likes to paint and travel.

This free form poem is about my two cats, Jasper and Alice, and the significant role they play in my everyday life, more specifically so, my mental wellness. I simply cannot imagine my life without the

two of them. Many have asked me where their names come from, and the answer is always: "No, it does not stem from the Twilight movies". Jasper and Alice were both rescued as kittens. They were abandoned and left to die. Shortly after, I adopted them from an animal rescue agency who shared their stories on social media. Jasper and Alice have always been by my side; through both personal and professional, downfalls and victories. Up to now, and from my 12 years of experience in the field, I have relocated several times. I have moved from one city to the next, all for the love of what I do and for the opportunities that came my way. I am happy to report that I have found my way back to academia, and this is where I'd like to stay.



Jasper (on the left) and Alice (on the right).

Competing interests: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval: Not required.

E-mail address: kochg@cput.ac.za.

Jasper and Alice, my children of fur,
how anyone could have abandoned you,
I will never understand.

I adopted you when you were oh so small.
One would think that I rescued you,
but truth be told, I think it is the other way 'round.

You have traveled with me, from city to city.
Always by my side, taking those risks and chasing those dreams.
“Now that we have arrived, dad - please can we stay?”

Early mornings, like clockwork, you wake me up,
and maybe, just maybe - you do this,
as a reminder for me to start my day.

They say pets have therapeutic benefits.
Believe me when I say: “You two slay!”
Oh, and not in the Twilight TV series type of way...

On days that are tough, and when I feel like I've had enough,
you are always there for me, both, in your own, unique ways...
Jasper, you like to cuddle and Alice, you like to talk.

From your comforting purrs when you welcome me at the door,
to your loving stares and affection.
The two of you, Jasper and Alice: have stolen my heart.

From working in a stressful environment,
and being a sufferer of anxiety and high blood pressure,
you just know how to make me feel calm and connected with nature.

You remind me how important it is to stay humble.
You accept me for who I am.
You never judge.

You make me smile, and I appreciate your gifts,
from the tail curls to all the dead insects...
You easily turn a bad day into a good one.

Jasper and Alice - forever and always,
with you by my side, I can do anything.
My two best friends, until the end.