

NEVER SAY THE FOLLOWING TO SOMEONE GRIEVING

“I know exactly how you feel”

No, you really don't know how they feel.

“They are better off now”

They know that but it doesn't help their pain.

“They wouldn't want you to be sad”

*How could we presume to know what they would want?
Besides, they need to mourn, not be reprimanded for their
grief.*

“Give yourself sometime”

Time just sounds like more pain which is no help at all.

“You'll get through this”

*Again, you have no way of knowing if, when, or how they will
survive this-and it's not helpful to imply that you know.*

“At least you had all those years together”

*To suggest that they were fortunate to have all those years
may be true but that is precisely why it hurts so much now!*

“When I lost my.....”

Your attempts to empathize with their unimaginable pain and loss as if you could know what they are going through is misguided, to say the least. It can feel like an attempt to make this about you instead of them.

“He (she) is at peace now.

That may be true-but the one to whom we have just spoken to is not.

Any comments designed to let the grieving know you understand what they are going through is NOT appropriate or helpful.

You have probably had your own suffering-but attempts to relate to their pain often just feels to them like we are trying to diminish the importance of theirs.

Note: This is an awkward time. We want to be comforting. We want to say something helpful. Unfortunately, more often than not, what comes out of our mouths can be anything but helpful.

As a general rule of thumb, the less you say the better. True empathy can be felt without a word being said.

Just show up and be there for them.

