

## 10 Worst Things to Say to a Grieving Person

If you want to be consoling and compassionate when offering condolence, **avoid** phrases like the following:

1. **"Stop crying; you're only making it worse."** Expressing emotions, even strongly if so inclined, is a natural, normal, and healthy reaction to death.
2. **"You should let your emotions out or you'll feel worse later."** It's also normal for some people to *not* cry; not showing outward emotions doesn't mean the person is grieving less or will have some kind of "delayed reaction."
3. **"At least he's not suffering anymore."** This offers little condolence. Whatever the circumstances of the death, the bereaved person is still suffering.
4. **"You must be strong." (Or "God never gives us more than we can handle.")** Such statements imply that it's wrong to feel bereft, which is a perfectly natural response.
5. **"God must have wanted her."** No mortal can purport to know God's purpose. People who don't believe in God might also bristle at your presumption in attaching a religious significance to the loss.
6. **"Don't dwell on it."** It's normal and natural -- as well as helpful -- to talk about the person who died.
7. **"I know exactly how you feel."** In fact, you can't. Even if you've experienced a similar loss, you're not the bereaved person, and you didn't have the same relationship to the person who died.
8. **"At least he was old enough to live a full life."** How old would old "enough" be?
9. **"You're lucky. At least [you have money, you're young and attractive, etc.]."** Loss is always horrible. Comparing misfortunes to others' or to alternate scenarios won't make the person feel better.
10. **"It's been [six months, one year, etc.]; it's time to move on."** People never stop grieving for a lost loved one. Affixing a deadline to mourning is insensitive and does little to help people learn to live through their loss.

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