

WHAT TO SAY WHEN SOMEONE SAYS SOMETHING RUDE

Choose the line that matches how direct, safe, and done you feel.

A QUICK NOTE

Being caught off guard does not mean you have to accept the comment—or produce the perfect comeback. Pick one sentence. Let it do its job.

IF YOU WANT CLARITY

“What did you mean by that?”
“Was that meant to be helpful?”

IF YOU WANT A DO-OVER

“I’m going to give you a chance to rephrase that.”
“Let’s try that again—with the kindness setting turned on.”

IF YOU WANT A BOUNDARY

“Please don’t speak to me that way.”
“That comment isn’t okay with me.”

IF HUMOR WILL HELP

“Bold choice for an out-loud sentence.”
“That thought may have been happier as an inside thought.”

IF YOU ARE COMPLETELY DONE

“I’m not continuing this conversation in this tone.”
“I’m going to leave that comment right where you put it.”

IF YOU WANT CALM AND DIRECT

“I’m not sure what response you expected, but I’m not available for disrespect.”
“We can talk about the issue without talking to each other like that.”

WHEN A COMEBACK IS NOT THE JOB If the comment includes a threat, harassment, discrimination, coercion, retaliation, or a serious power or safety concern, skip the clever line. Leave if needed, document what happened, and get appropriate support.

Look at you: calm, clear, and refusing to audition for someone else’s bad mood.