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WHAT WOULD DON DRAPER SAY?

Thirteen razor-sharp Don Draper comebacks to help save you in any situation.

BY JAMIE BECKMAN

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Ever prepared with a zinger, an off-the-cuff motivational speech, or a winning sales pitch (unless it's for Hershey's), Don Draper says the things we wish we could. Things aren't quite working out for Don these days, but, delivered correctly, these razor-sharp Don Draper comebacks will help you shut down your critics, deftly shift blame to someone else, win a fight with your girlfriend, and save you at the workplace.*

*Results not guaranteed.

[Jon Hamm: A League of His Own>>>](#)

1. When someone assaults your character...

"I don't think about you at all."

—Season 5, Episode 9, "Dark Shadows"

Insults that throw around the word "you" can be the most cutting, but it's possible to smack them down quick: After Don ditched copywriter Michael Ginsberg's Sno Ball ad and pitched his own idea instead, Ginsberg said, "I feel sorry for you." Then Don lobbed this gem back at him. Match point.

2. When someone asks you about a competitor...

"I've never heard of him."

—Season 4, Episode 5, "The Chrysanthemum and the Sword"

If Don can lie to the *Wall Street Journal*, like he did about his nemesis Ted Chaough pre-SC&P merger, you can lie when someone inquires about a rival athlete or your girlfriend's ex.

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3. When you're stressed out...

"Fear stimulates my imagination."

—Season 1, Episode 1, "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes"

That's how Don explained his inspiration for his big Lucky Strike win to Peggy way back in the first episode. Repeat that to yourself when you're up against an impossible deadline.

4. When you're ordering a drink...

"Old fashioned."

—Most memorably, Season 3, Episode 3, "My Old Kentucky Home." Don hopped over the bar at Roger Sterling's country-club wedding and made one for himself and hotelier Conrad Hilton.

This is a drink order that people respect. When he's not swigging straight whisky in his office, it's Don's go-to cocktail. Next time you're out with your boss or at dinner with your girlfriend's parents, order it instead of a light beer. Approving nods will follow.

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5. When your coworker emails you with an "emergency" before 7 a.m....

"Don't wake me up and throw your failures in my face."

—Season 5, Episode 9, "Dark Shadows"

The old saying holds true: A lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part. But Don said it better, when Pete Campbell rung him up on a Sunday to tell him their firm was cut out of a *New York Times Magazine* article.

6. When you're breaking up with someone...

"Change is neither good nor bad. It simply is."

—Season 3, Episode 2, "Love Among the Ruins"

Don said this in a meeting with Madison Square Garden execs, but it could help soften a blow in your personal life—if you're brave enough to try it. Especially handy if you're breaking up with a woman who's smarter than you. She'll hate you forever, but you'll throw her off for a second. Run while you can.

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7. When your number-two at work screws up...

"I'm glad this is an environment where you feel free to fail."

—Season 4, Episode 7, "The Suitcase"

Peggy didn't deserve this takedown for her work on Samsonite, but can you imagine saying it to someone who does?

8. When you're convincing yourself to go to the gym...

"You want some respect? Go out and get it for yourself."

—Season 4, Episode 8, "The Summer Man"

There are no shortcuts to what you want. Nobody's going to do those deadlifts for you, either.

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9. When a coworker tells you they're "obviously" going to complete a task...

"I don't know how obvious that is."

—Season 6, Episode 3, "The Collaborators"

Calling BS on someone else's intentions can rattle a person. It was amusing when Don's partner-in-adultery Sylvia Rosen told Don that she "obviously" wouldn't drink an entire bottle of wine if he ordered one at an Italian restaurant, but at work, questioning a colleague's logic can give you the upper hand.

10. When you're trying to make a huge decision...

"Is that what you want, or is that what people expect of you?"

—Season 4, Episode 3, "The Good News"

RIP Lane Pryce, who Don said this to when Lane was encouraged to hightail it back to London to be with his wife. (Don actually stole this sentiment from future conquest Dr. Faye Miller.) Accepting a new job, proposing, moving across the country... None of these things is to be taken lightly, and giving yourself a reality check is wise. (Even though reality isn't exactly Don's specialty.)

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11. When your girlfriend threatens you...

"I'm going to sleep. You can do what you want."

Season 5, Episode 1, "A Little Kiss"

Arguably one of the jerkiest things Don has ever uttered, this quote is worth a shot if you want to stem a late-night argument. (Similarly, he used "I'm going to bed" when Betty finally accused him of cheating in Season 2.) Know, however, that it almost surely will not go as smoothly as it did after that ill-fated Zou Bisou Bisou birthday party. Megan went to the balcony, defeated; your girlfriend will probably do something much worse.

12. When there's too much bromance going on...

"Why does everybody need to talk about everything?"

—Season 4, Episode 5, "The Chrysanthemum and the Sword"

Granted, Don Draper could have benefited from a little talk therapy before his life got this bad, but he's got a point: Some things should go unsaid.

13. When you're talking to a cranky client, and you need to win their favor...

"If you don't like what's being said, change the conversation."

—Season 3, Episode 2, "Love Among the Ruins"

This quote is so savvy, Don's protégée Peggy ripped it off for her Heinz ketchup pitch in season 6. It doesn't even really matter what you say next; the team across the table will just be happy you're offering a potential solution. Of course, this is a line so famous that they've probably heard it already, so preface the quote with "As they say..." But you'll remember who said it first.

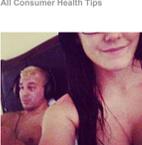
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