

How to Respond to the Crazy Crap Your BF's Mom Says

We know moms say the darndest things! But things can get a little sticky when it's not your mom

By Melissa F. Pheterson - June 6, 2013



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Whether she's trying to over-share, scare you away or intimidate you, here's some examples of what to say when your boyfriend's mother's big mouth lands you in an awkward situation. (Btw, the following are real words that actually came out of real people's mouths.)

(While squeezing his tush) "Of course I'm allowed to grab it; I made it!"

Stef Safran, Chicago-based dating expert, suggests going with something like: "I hope you don't mind that I grab it, too!" Moms can be protective

when it comes to their sons, and maybe even a little jealous. Play along while squelching the urge to fire a snappy comeback."

"What's your name again?"

"If she insists that she keeps forgetting, ask her why she thinks that is," suggests Rhonda Richards-Smith, a relationship expert in Los Angeles. "By doing so, you maintain a positive stance and leave the negativity where it originated -- with her."

"My son needs to marry an orphan so I don't have to compete with her mother."

"Say: 'He loves you more than anything -- you don't need to worry,'" says Dr. Ramani Durvasula, relationship expert in California. "Don't get down in the mud with her. Just because you are dealing with someone unhinged doesn't mean you have to go there, too. Always make sure you can leave the conversation with your head held high."

(To her son, in your apartment) "I'm sure you'll move back home soon; there's nothing keeping you here."

"It's not uncommon for mothers to minimize the importance of their sons' relationships," warns Richards-Smith. "As long as you are secure in it, let him worry about conveying how much he cares for you to his mother." Ramini cautions: "If he lets this disrespect continue -- take stock -- he may not be worth the bother."

"Don't worry if you lose your underwear. The maid will find and wash it when she strips the bed."

Snap back with, "Oh, I don't wear underwear," says Safran. "Take the comment in stride and express this is not your intention during your visit," advises Richards-Smith. Then, tell your man, "It's crucial to set boundaries with his mother early on, but without the support of your boyfriend, this is nearly impossible."

(On Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement) "House rules: Either no sex or no shower today. Which one are you gonna choose?"

"I always tell people when someone says something inappropriate, breathe, smile and say: 'Why do you want to know?' It puts the question back in Mom's corner," says Safran.

"I'm sure you won't like our Asian meal -- here's your pasta." (Said to an Italian who frequently visited her boyfriend's Asian family)

"Request what everyone else is having and bring an Italian dessert for the whole family -- extolling the virtues of our 'melting pot' nation," says Safran.

"If this happens repeatedly, your boyfriend needs to step in and explain that being Italian does not mean you eat only Italian food," says Richards-Smith. His mother may be trying to send you a larger message, which is a deeper conversation your boyfriend needs to have with his mother directly. Making you feel out of place is never okay."

"Never get yourself pregnant to try to get a man to stay with you. I did that and it turned out to be a big mistake. Probably my worst decision."

"It's common for a guy's mother to attempt to 'warn' girlfriends about not making the same mistakes they have, but don't let her project her issues onto yours," says Richards-Smith. "Convey that you are very sorry to hear that she went through something this painful. If she persists, just gently point out that you couldn't imagine how difficult it must have been."

"When will you have me to dinner so I know if you can cook for my son?" There's really no point in even validating such a cliché. But, if you are an awesome cook and want to show off, invite her to dinner already. Either way, a good way to break the ice on that one is to say something like, "Sure, I'm good at making reservations," says Safran.

"He should have married his ex-girlfriend."

Oh boy. What can you say but, "I know, it's popular these days to have a starter wife, but I'm glad he's not into that," says Safran. According to Ramini, "If he lets you twist in the wind after his mother blows through town, think long and hard about the relationship."

"It seems you've put on weight. You should go to the gym."

"Even if you are hurt, try to respond politely." Kill her with kindness, suggests Ramini. If you sense that her nastiness comes from insecurity, make sure to compliment her on what a great son she raised.

"You are *really* lucky to have my son."

Safran suggests coming back with, "And my parents would tell you he is lucky to have me." At the end of the day, you can't change people, but you can change their attitude toward you."