

You Have Got to Be Kidding Me!

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Да уж: Yeah, right; for sure; I hear ya

The Russian language has lovely ways of expressing tenderness and warmth — think of all those luscious diminutives — but it is equally strong at the other end of the emotional scale.

When you're in an emphatic mood — Russian to the rescue! Just one little syllable — *уж* — placed strategically in your sentence and an appropriate tone of voice intensifies your message most emphatically. But because it's hard to know where to place *уж* in a sentence and what it means in various contexts, here's a primer of standard *уж* expressions for some standard emotions.

You can't believe it. They did it again! Your friend says they are jerks. You say: *Да уж!* (You're telling me!) "*Мы опоздали!*" ("We're late!") your kids say, after they dragged their feet. *Да уж!* (What a surprise!) Your ex has failed to show up to take the kids, as your mother delights in pointing out. *Да уж!* (No kidding!) Eye-roll optional.

You don't want to. Really. You are not going to go parasailing, bungee jumping or skinny dipping. Да уж нетушки! (No way!) And you're not going to make that dish your significant other likes that takes two days, 6,000 rubles and every pan in your kitchen. Ну уж нет! (Dream on, buddy!)

You're mellow, going with the flow. At the dacha, you didn't want your in-laws to come out for the weekend. You tried to tell them nicely that it wasn't convenient. But they came anyway. So you are going to put them to work. Раз уж вы приехали, помогите нам покрасить забор. (Since you're here, you might as well help us paint the fence.)

At work, you didn't expect to have to put out that prospectus by the end of the week. But: Раз уж надо, тогда отложим другую работу. (Seeing as we have to, let's put off our other work.) And since we've got a good head of steam, let's keep going. Раз уж начали, давай сегодня закончим. (As long as we've started, let's finish it today.)

Hey, it's OK. Yes, you've been complaining about it for weeks, but it turns out that the prospectus wasn't hard to do, your in-laws were actually helpful, and you even enjoyed their company. В общем, это не так уж плохо. (All in all, it's not as bad as I thought it would be.) In fact: Учитывая обстоятельства, это не так уж плохо. (It's not too bad, considering.)

Hey, it's not OK. It's really too much. Or too little. Or too late. Это уж слишком! (That's it! That's the limit!) Yes, I know we decided to buy the couch and chairs, but the end tables, coffee table and rug, too? Это уж чересчур! (That's just too much.) Yes, I know I suggested it, but: Купить всё сейчас — это уж слишком. (Buying it all now is over the top.)

But hey, while we're on the subject: Если уж на то пошло, я считаю, что пора нам обновить гостиную. (While we're at it, I think we ought to redo the living room.)

Because really, you'd rather buy it now. Лучше уж мы сейчас купим, пока цены не растут. (Better buy it now before prices go up.) Что уж тут говорить? (I mean, what's there to say?) И в конце концов — деньги не так уж важны. (And in the end, money isn't that important.)

Да уж! (Yeah, right!)

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