



TALKING SMACK

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Welcome to Smacktown, where the biggest mouth boasts the biggest fame. Just ask Raw wrestling superstar Stone Cold Steve Austin.

After winning the "King of the Ring" tournament in 1996, Austin turned to a freshly defeated Jake "the Snake" Roberts - known for his tendency to quote John 3:16 - and taunted him.

"Austin 3:16 says 'I just whooped your ass!' "

Well, Rothman 3:16 says, "Um, Mr. Stone Cold, sir . . . I know I can't whoop your ass, bein' that I'm 5 feet tall and a girl and all. But could ya teach me the mysterious and powerful ways of the smack talk so I can just say I will? " Since the muscular meanie joins Ric Flair and Triple H at the World Arena on Monday (Smackdown! celebrities Sable, Brock Lesnar and The Undertaker appear Tuesday), Austin agreed to provide some pointers.

Pull them boots up high, son. It's about to get deep.

1. YOU'VE GOTTA BE YOU AND ONLY YOU

"Vince McMahon started editing my lines years ago," Austin says. "I said, 'You know, I'm only 6-2, 250. You got guys here 7 feet, 300 pounds plus. I've got black trunks and black boots. If you take my personality away from me, I can't compete with anybody. But if you give me my personality, then I can compete with anybody.' And I did. So that being said, I just go out there; I be myself."

2. STICK TO YOUR ROOTS

"I grew up in South Texas. When I started finally getting an opportunity to talk in WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment), I was just spitting out all this stuff," he says, "like 'open up a can of whoopass' and 'stompin' a mudhole in ya and walkin' it dry.' Just all stuff that I grew up hearing."

"Don't get me wrong," he adds. "It's easy to invent a bunch of that stuff, too."

3. WATCH THE WORLD

"When we go deer hunting we just sit around, and after we hunt every night we're sitting there drinking beer and everybody is telling stories and talking trash," he says. "Keep your ears open and listen to your surroundings and believe me, the way people talk these days, from different walks of life. . . . You can learn something from anybody."

4. PERSONAL TOUCH

"Personal issues draw interest," he says. "When doing a promo, as personal as you can get it, as long as you're . . . within the storyline. You don't want to just start running down the guy's family."

5. ONE STEP OVER THE LINE

"There are a few mild swear words that I'll use," he says. " 'Ass' or 'S.O.B.' or something like that. It's not done too gratuitously either, because too much is too much. If it fits, then it's time to use it. But if not, you don't throw it out there just so you can use a swear word. . . . It just basically makes what you're doing mean nothing."

6. EXPRESS YOURSELF

"So many times people just say the same thing: 'I'm gonna kick your ass. I'm gonna do that. I'm gonna do that,' " he mimics. "C'mon. Make a point."

7. DO IT, SAY IT, BE IT

"Be convincing in what you're saying. Believe in what you're saying," he says. "It's gotta come from the heart to be convincing."

8. WATCH YOUR TONE

"When I'm talkin' trash about someone, I don't yell, but that's when I tend to raise my voice - put in the exclamation points, the commas, the periods - so that I get my point across," he says. "It's done with intensity and complete believability."

9. IN YOUR EYES

"Look him in the eye, point a few fingers at him. You've got to look someone dead in the eye. If they're wearing sunglasses, tell them to take their stupid little sunglasses off because they're probably hiding behind them."

10. ENJOY THE SILENCE

"Some guys will go up there, and they don't know really how to talk," he notes. "They'll just start running their mouth and there's never any hesitation or pause. . . Sometimes you pause and give those people a chance to digest it."

THE DETAILS

WWE Raw and Smackdown!

Where: World Arena, 3185 Venetucci Blvd.

When: Raw, 5:45 p.m. Monday; Smackdown! 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday

Tickets: \$15-\$40; call 576-2626