Idiomatic and colloquial responses

These exercises contain a lot of spoken expressions (some of them are formal, but most of them are informal) that we use in response to things that people say. For example, if somebody says "*How did you know that I've been offered that job in London?*", you might reply "*A little bird told me.*" (which means that you are not going to say who told you).

Exercise 1: Match the sentences 1 – 25 with the most suitable response from the box at the bottom of the page. Use each response once only.

1. Goodbye. See you next week.
2. I forgot my wife's birthday.
3. My wife and I are celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary tonight.
4. Who was that man I saw you with last night?
5. I waited for the bus for half an hour, then three came along at once.
6. I've just eaten six hot dogs and now I've got a terrible stomach ache.
7. If you look at my girlfriend again, I'll kill you!
8. Thanks for inviting me to dinner.
9. I'm brilliant! My teacher says I'm the best student in her class.
10. Have a nice weekend.
11. What shall we have for dinner?
12. Please don't tell anyone my secret.
13. I'm tired. I'm going to bed.
14. I'm going to spend the weekend sitting in front of the television.
15. These chocolates look delicious.
16. Have you had enough to eat?
17. I can't come to your party.
18. I've just won £10,000!
19. I've got some amazing news.
20. By the time I'm 30, I'll be a millionaire and married to a supermodel.
21. I've heard that you're going to give me a surprise party for my birthday.
22. Acchhhooooooo!
23. Men are much more intelligent than women.
24. Come on, let's go or we'll be late.
25. What are you going to get me for my birthday?

(A) Get a life!
(B) Hands off!
(C) I'm absolutely stuffed!
(D) Oh no, who let the cat out of the bag?
(E) Night night, sweet dreams.
(F) What complete rubbish!
(G) Oh yes, you and whose army?
(H) No way! You're pulling my leg!
(I) Stop blowing your own trumpet!
(J) Same to you.
(K) Never you mind. Wait and see!
(L) Hang on, give me a moment.
(M) Bless you!
(N) Oh dear, so you're in the doghouse again?
(O) I could murder a curry.
(P) Mind your own business!
(Q) How typical!
(R) Yes, cheerio, take care.
(S) Fire away, I'm all ears.
(T) In your dreams!
(U) That'll teach you.
(V) Oh, what a shame.
(W) You're welcome. Come in and make yourself at home.
(X) Don't worry, my lips are sealed.
(Y) Oh, congratulations

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Exercise 2: Choose the correct word in **bold** to complete the responses in these dialogues. In one of them, all three options are possible.

1. "I'm feeling a bit miserable at the moment."
   "**Jeer / Cheer / Sneer** up!"

2. "Can we have your decision?"
   "Um, let me **dream / think / sleep** on it."

3. "I, er, um, well, you know, I, er, the thing is, you see, well..."
   "Come on, **spit / cough / blow** it out!"

4. "I, er....."
   "What's the matter? Has the cat got your **tongue / lips / teeth**?"

5. "Come on darling, give me a great big kiss and then have a dance with me!"
   "Go and take a running **leap / jump / fall**!"

6. "I'm taking my IELTS exam tomorrow."
   "Good luck. I'll be keeping my **toes / fingers / legs** crossed for you."

7. "Can I borrow your mobile to make a quick call?"
   "Sure. Be my **host / friend / guest**."

8. "It's my birthday today."
   "Is it? Oh, well, many happy **reruns / returns / repeats**."

9. "Could I use your car tonight?"
   "I'd **prefer / wish / rather** you didn't"

10. "I promise not to be late from now on."
    "Yeah right, that'll be the **day / week / month**!"

11. "My girlfriend left me last week."
    "Oh dear, so you're on the **fence / wall / shelf** again."

12. "Do you know Patrick Hartley?"
    "No, the name doesn't ring any **phones / bells / changes**"

13. "I'm the boss here, and you will do what I say!"
    "Stop throwing your **weight / body / head** around!"

14. "I'm afraid I've run out of coffee. I can only offer you tea."
    "That's all right. Any **harbour / dock / port** in a storm.

15. "I'm sorry, but I forgot to do my homework again."
    "Again? It's time you pulled your **trousers / socks / pants** up, young man."

16. "I'm under too much pressure at college."
    "Well, if you can't stand the heat, get out of the **fire / oven / kitchen**."

17. "I failed my driving test again."
    "Oh, **hard / bad / tough** luck!"

18. "What's the name of that restaurant we went to last week?"
    "It's on the tip of my **tongue / finger / nose**. I'll remember it in a minute."

19. "Have you ever been to hospital?"
    "No, touch **cloth / paper / wood**."

20. "Excuse me, could you take our picture?"
    "Sure, give me your camera. OK, say **chips / cheese / cheers** everyone!"

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