

## From the NSA'S Guide to Winning Friends and Influencing People

By Don Zolidis

MOM 2  
DAD 2  
TEENAGER

MOM 2 (*calling off*)

Sweetheart, time for dinner!

DAD 2 (*calling off*)

It looks really yummy down here!

MOM 2

Fred, you're just pandering now.

DAD 2

Sorry.

*(TEENAGER enters, wearing headphones, in the middle of texting.)*

MOM 2

Oh you're here how wonderful!

DAD 2

How was your day today, sweetie?

*(TEENAGER sits, not paying the slightest attention to her parents.)*

MOM 2

Did you learn anything fun?

*(She continues texting.)*

Okay. I bet that was neat.

DAD 2

Did you see some of your friends?

*(She continues texting.)*

Good.

MOM 2

Would you like some milk?

*(the slightest nod from TEENAGER.)*

Was that a nod?

DAD 2

I'm not sure that was a nod.

MOM 2

I can't say for certain if that was a nod.

DAD 2

I don't think she did. I think it was a twitch.

MOM 2

Did you nod, honey? When I asked if you wanted milk did you nod? Nod if you nodded before, okay?

*(They watch like hawks. No response.)*

DAD 2

See I don't think she nodded before.

MOM 2

I think you're right. Sweetie, would you rather have water for dinner?

*(slight head shake.)*

DAD 2

That was a definite no.

MOM 2

Right.

DAD 2

I'm so glad we're communicating!

MOM 2

We did a good job!

*(MOM 2 and DAD 2 hug.)*

So how about soda?

DAD 2 *(to the audience)*

Ding! Now let's try it with us equipped the NSA Way.

MOM 2

Honey, time for dinner!

DAD 2

I'm sure it's going to be delicious because your mother made it and she puts a lot of care and love into our meals!

MOM 2

I sure do!

DAD 2

That's what I love about you.

MOM 2

And I love that you love things about me.

*(TEENAGER enters, hooked into headphones and texting, just as before.)*

Hi sweetheart! How was your day?

*(No response.)*

DAD 2

What did you learn about today?

*(No response.)*

MOM 2

Sweetie?

*(short pause.)*

All right I think it's time to use the device.

*(DAD 2 takes out "the device." This could really be anything from a black cube to a remote control to anything you want. Dad presses a button.)*

*(TEENAGER looks up instantly.)*

TEENAGER

What the heck, my phone just died!

MOM 2

Hi Honey.

TEENAGER

Do you know if the wi-fi is still working?

DAD 2

I'm afraid we've incapacitated the internet for the moment.

TEENAGER

What? You mean the wi-fi is down?

MOM 2

Oh no. We've cancelled the internet. Worldwide.

TEENAGER

You've cancelled the entire internet!?

DAD 2

Believe me, we hold limitless power.

MOM 2

This way we can talk.

TEENAGER

Why couldn't you just turn off the wi-fi? You cancelled everyone's internet?

DAD 2

Honey, if we've learned anything from the NSA, it's that overkill is a good first step.

TEENAGER

You're demented!

DAD 2

I prefer misunderstood.

MOM 2

Now... let's talk. How was your day? And we want details!

TEENAGER

Well... I'm glad you asked. Uh... my day began ordinarily enough. My usual routine. I got out of bed and discovered I had an itch, which would be the first of many irritations throughout the day. I thought about using my finger to scratch the itch, as I had a bit of a rough nail left over from the night before. However, I discovered that the edge of my math book provided just the right point for scratching, so I used that instead. After two or three seconds of vigorous scratching I could again concentrate on my day. Upon looking into the mirror, however, I discovered yet another tragedy in the making: a pimple. One of those big juicy red ones. With just the slightest hint of pus emerging from its summit. The way I saw it, I had three choices. I could live with it, I could apply a cream to it – I had several brands – or I could attempt to pop it with my fingers. I couldn't very well leave it alone, as Bobby Henson is in my second period class, and I am desperately in love with him. The cream might reduce its unsightliness, but it wouldn't probably wouldn't take full effect until fourth period at least. That left the third option. Squeezing the pimple until it burst. So, taking my thumb and forefinger –

DAD 2

Okay I'm turning the internet back on.

*(DAD 2 presses the device. Everything comes back on.)*

MOM 2

Nice talking to you honey.

*(TEENAGER has gone back to texting. She nods ever so slightly.)*

Ooh I think she nodded.

To read the rest of this play, visit [www.playscripts.com](http://www.playscripts.com)