

Her Own Worst Enemy: Pragmatics Activity, Wearing someone down

In scene 4, Laith and Aida have a conversation in the car. Laith is trying to convince Aida to do an audition, but she does not want to. He tries to wear her down.

1. Have students listen to/read the scene and answer the questions in a pair/share.
 - What happens?
 - Who wears the other down?
 - How do they do it?
2. Have students listen/read again and tick the strategies they hear? (see next page for downloadable forms.)

1. Playing down the difficulty or effort required	
2. Playing up the positive outcome(s)	
3. Bargaining, e.g., promising never to never bring it up again	
4. Bringing up obligations	

3. Examine the script for useful language for “wearing someone down,” and brainstorm additional examples of words and expressions people use:

Examples:

- “Oh come on!”
- “It’s not that big a deal!”
- “It won’t kill you!”

4. Have students pair up and develop a role play using one or more of the strategies.
5. Have students perform for another pair and get feedback.
6. Invite volunteers to come up and perform for the class.
7. Give feedback on anything that comes up such as language, appropriateness regarding status and context, or pronunciation and intonation.

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Pragmatics: Wearing someone down

Choose a role play topic and practice with a partner. Then work with another pair. Listen to the role play and check the strategies you observe. Then share your observations and switch roles.

Strategy	Group 1	Group 2
5. Playing down the difficulty or effort required		
6. Playing up the positive outcome(s)		
7. Bargaining: Promising never to never bring it up again		
8. Bringing up past favors (if you are desperate)		
Which partner wears the other one down?		

Pragmatics: Wearing someone down

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Pragmatics: Wearing someone down

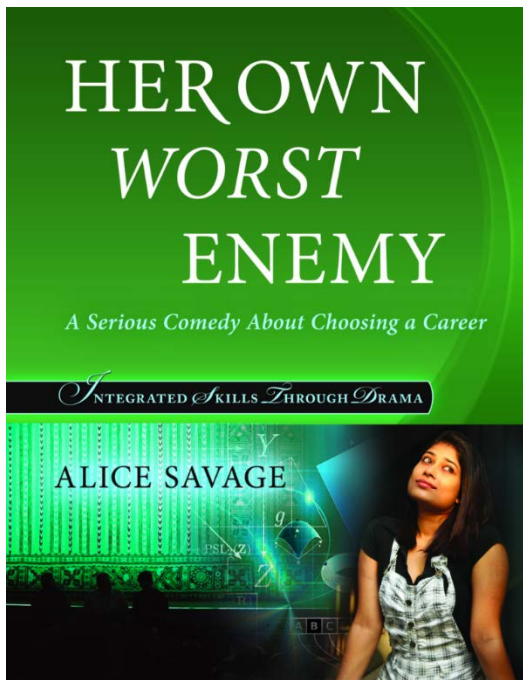
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Her Own Worst Enemy

A serious comedy about choosing a career

By Alice Savage



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Drama ... is one of the most compelling of language learning resources. It develops pronunciation, grammar and conversational skills, provides spin-off into writing, offers unlimited repetition without boredom—and most importantly, fosters the creation of a learning community through co-operative ensemble work. This book offers a wealth of preparatory activities, suggestions for varied ways of using the text and helpful suggestions for follow-up.

—Alan Maley

Her Own Worst Enemy is a fun play to produce, but it's not just a play. It is actually a complete curriculum... Students and teachers will look forward to coming to class!

—Joy Lindsey, Rice University

About the Book

Aida is in her last year of high school. She wants to pursue a career in science. But her performance in a school play has caught the attention of the theatre director at a famous performing arts college. When he invites her to audition for a spot at the school, Aida's friends and relatives are excited about the opportunity. Everyone has advice for her, but Aida must make her own decision about her future.

As students produce the play, they will practice many skills, including:

- Pronunciation Practice: Sentence and word stress
- Pragmatics Practice: Encouraging someone
- Production Skills: Learning a part and staging plays for students
- Attentive Listening: Discussing a career
- Readings on STEM Careers and Liberal Arts Careers, with profiles of Steve Herbet, CEO of Nimbix cloud computing, and Molly Dill, Production Director at the Houston Grand Opera
- Debate and Discussion: The future of science, how to choose a career
- Creative Writing: Add a scene, write a new play, change the ending

About the Author



Alice Savage comes from a theatre family: Her grandfather was a professor of theatre arts, and her father is a playwright. The Integrated Skills Through Drama series has given her the opportunity to bring together this family experience in the theatre with her love of teaching. In addition to the three plays in that series, *Her Own Worst Enemy*, *Only the Best Intentions*, and *Out of Control*, Alice has written many ELT books with Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, and Wayzgoose Press.

Alice has a Master of Arts in Teaching from the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. She is currently a professor of ESOL at Lone Star College System, in Houston, Texas.