

**From Powerline – the Story of Me, Mario, and your Mom**  
*By Don Zolidis*

MEGA-SNAP, any gender, working a help line for video games  
JOEY, any gender, calling in

*Mega-Snap is at a desk, waiting.  
Joey is somewhere else, calling.*

MEGA-SNAP

Note how quickly I establish dominance in the conversation.

*The phone rings.*

Powerline, this is MEGA-SNAP.

*Perhaps he plays a sound effect. Otherwise he just makes a sound effect like an explosion with his mouth.*

You have reached me, mortal. Speak!

*JOEY speaks into his phone. Joey looks scared – he’s in a bedroom.*

JOEY

Hi this is Joey.

MEGA-SNAP

You are correct, yes.

JOEY

Yes I know my name is Joey.

MEGA-SNAP

I have just confirmed that.

JOEY

And I’m playing Mike Tyson’s Punch-Out.

MEGA-SNAP

YES.

JOEY

That’s right.

MEGA-SNAP

Tell me Joey, what is giving you trouble?

JOEY

I can’t beat Mike Tyson. He keeps punching me out.

MEGA-SNAP

Yeah, that's the title of the game, isn't it?

JOEY

So how do I beat him?

*MEGA-SNAP laughs confidently.*

MEGA-SNAP

You don't beat him.

JOEY

What.

MEGA-SNAP

You cannot beat Mike Tyson. He designed the game.

JOEY

I don't think that's true.

MEGA-SNAP

You think Mike Tyson designed a game with Nintendo where you BEAT HIM UP? You?! Who are you?! You are NOTHING! Do you even have any training as a boxer?

JOEY

No I'm playing a video game!

MEGA-SNAP

Therefore you will fail.

JOEY

But why make a game you can't win?

MEGA-SNAP

To teach you about life, Joey! And the lesson is this: Don't. Fight. Mike Tyson. You will be crushed.

JOEY

So why did I even buy this game?!

MEGA-SNAP

You bought this game because you had a dream of becoming the heavyweight champion of the world. Which was a stupid, stupid dream. Let me ask you a question: Do you have supportive parents?

JOEY

I guess.

MEGA-SNAP

Did they tell you to dream big?

JOEY

Yeah.

MEGA-SNAP

Did they tell you you could be anything you wanted to be?

JOEY

Yeah they did.

MEGA-SNAP

They were *LIARS!* You can't become heavyweight champion of the world! You would get destroyed! Your parents spoon-fed you a slurry of false promises and empty dreams! They mashed it up like pureed peas and force fed you a nutrient-free swill of lies, Joey! *LIES!* Mike Tyson's Punch Out is an extended lesson in the cold, hard realities of life! You will fail. Your dreams are dumb. Resign yourself to a life of disappointment. That's what you bought when you bought this game: Truth. You bought yourself a cartridge of truth, mister. Be thankful.

JOEY

Can I talk to your manager?

MEGA-SNAP

What?! Why?

JOEY

Because you don't seem like you're helping me.

MEGA-SNAP

I am helping you so much right now.

JOEY

I want to talk to your manager now please!

MEGA-SNAP

All right fine.

*Mega-Snap puts the phone to his chest. He summons a new character.*  
This is the Bert, the manager of Powerline. How may I assist you?

JOEY

I don't think I'm getting good advice from one of the game counselors.

MEGA-SNAP

Oh I see. Have you tried crying to your mommy about it?

JOEY

Is this Mega-Snap?!

MEGA-SNAP

You're darn tootin it's Mega-Snap! Another lesson! You don't get to talk to the manager of life. That's a free one!

JOEY

I thought I was paying ninety-nine cents a minute for this call.

MEGA-SNAP

Well all right yes you are paying for that lesson. Be grateful to me and Mike Tyson. I want you to applaud us in your prayers tonight.

JOEY

This is the worst call I've ever had!

MEGA-SNAP

Again, sometimes there are no solutions. Sometimes you lose. Sometimes –

JOEY (*taking out a gaming magazine*)

I might as well just look at this magazine I bought instead!

MEGA-SNAP

Bah! Magazines are for suckers!

JOEY

Oh hey look there's a whole article on Mike Tyson's Punch-Out.

MEGA-SNAP

What.

JOEY

'How to Beat Mike Tyson.' They have diagrams and everything.

MEGA-SNAP

Those diagrams were drawn by hacks and losers!

JOEY

This doesn't look that hard, actually.

MEGA-SNAP

That's not realistic. You'll never win!

JOEY

Thanks for this! My parents were right! I can be anything! Even heavyweight champion of the world! Wooooo!

*He hangs up.*

MEGA-SNAP

Heart-breaking.