

Mom needs to set boundaries

Dear Annie: Our oldest daughter is married to a nice man and they have a sweet 2-year-old daughter. My son-in-law makes good money and my daughter can afford to stay home, but they never seem to have enough to get ahead. My daughter has been known to spend foolishly. They only have one car and it doesn't run half the time. They can't afford another. We let them live in our home for a year rent-free, so they could save enough to purchase their first house.

I know I've enabled my daughter for her entire life. She is very spoiled and self-centered. We argue a great deal and exchange hurtful words. Regularly, I surrender to her selfishness and give her money or run errands for her, even though I work full-time. I do these things because she is a recovering alcoholic and drug addict, and I fear she will otherwise return to that life again. She doesn't attend her meetings anymore.

I don't know how to handle her. I'm either forced to defend myself or give in to her whims. She never appreciates anything I do for her and she never does anything for me. Her husband is no better. He is selfish and spoiled by his

Annie's Mailbox

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mother, and he also enables my daughter.

She's a good mother, but I babysit a lot. Her husband doesn't complain when she gets together with her friends, but he works long hours and they don't have much time together. I think he feels neglected.

How do I know when to do things for her and when not to? How do I tell the difference between enabling and being a good mother? When she gets into one of her horrible, blaming moods, how do I handle that? This child has become a bitter pill to swallow, but I love her so much. — *Mother of a Narcissist*

Dear Mom: You should back away from some of this drama. The hardest thing for a parent to do is watch a child fail, but you may need to step back and let it

happen. Your daughter cannot learn to stand on her own two feet if Mom is always holding her up. Her marriage issues and whether she attends meetings are no longer your business. Don't give her money if she cannot manage it responsibly. When she blames you for not indulging her, remain calm and say, "I'm sorry you feel that way." Walk away if she cannot stop berating you. Look into Al-Anon for yourself (al-anon.org). A good mother teaches her child to be independent and self-reliant, even when the process is painful to watch, and helps her accept that the universe doesn't owe her everything she demands.

Dear Annie: This is in response to "Not His Girlfriend," the woman whose husband objects to her acting as tour guide to a visiting male friend while the husband's at work. He obviously has a trust issue.

I regularly entertain my male friends of over 25 years at my house for lunch and conversation. My husband thinks this is fine. My children consider them uncles. Unless there are reasons for her husband not to trust her, he needs to chill out. — *Plattsburgh, N.Y.*

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Having trouble letting go of old baggage? Don't force it. One of the best ways to rid yourself of the heaviness is to seek new, lighter luggage. Get out there and make a replacement memory for the one you'd rather forget.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Tired people and hungry people are often grumpy people. Whatever you can do to make sure the basics are covered for you and yours will go a long way toward keeping the vibes positive at home.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Sooner or later, we all have to part with our money. You may as well have fun with this. So what if you're overly generous, silly or comfort-focused today? Get what you really, really want.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). When the work (or the entire relationship) seems draining, maybe it's just because you haven't found what's in it for you yet. Figure it out. If you can't find a payoff, consider making a change.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). In your brain, you're going head-to-head with someone and you're really in no mood to back down. Hey -- you're a human being with an ego to match. To some extent, that's healthy!

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Considering all the time and energy you've expended working on a certain knotty problem, it should come as no surprise when you get a sudden craving for freedom and distraction.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). This is an excellent moment to discuss the delicate issue at hand, though you should keep in mind that such discussions are best kept brief and possibly indirect. A pointed implication may get the message across.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your rating with one particular person doesn't matter as much as you think it does. There is a whole host of people out there who like you, not to mention the ones who love you dearly.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Avoid making sweeping generalizations about yourself. You're made up of many parts. Focus on one aspect at a time. Highlight the thing you like, and work on the thing you don't.

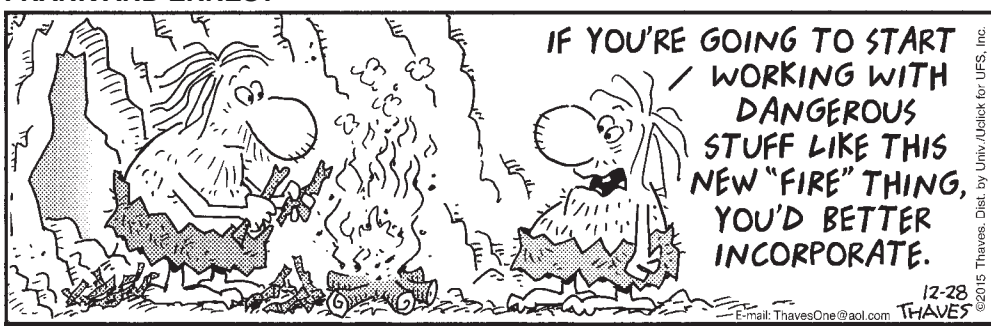
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You'll have a deep conversation that doesn't include any profound words or particularly interesting thoughts. In fact, the whole thing, if written down, would be categorized as small talk. But it's not. Not at all.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Don't put your self-care off for later, otherwise "later" will never come. Also, taking care of yourself should include more than the basics. Giving yourself mental stimulation and fun is part of it.

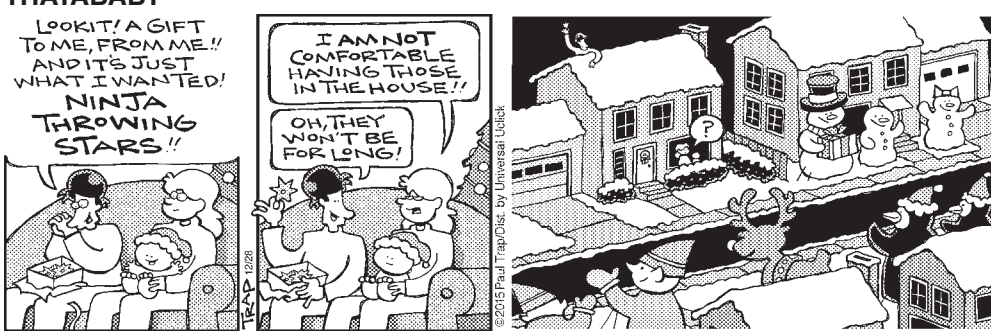
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). When you hit a dip in your mood, remember: Appreciating others is the quick route to self-esteem. You will always feel good about your kind and fair treatment of the people you meet on your path.

TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 29). You'll make your mark this year and it will be a creative expression of who you are in a most practical form. Many will use and love what you produce. Clarity of vision is your gift in the early year. April and May bring romantic adventure. You'll fight for the oppressed and win in June. Aquarius and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 13, 28, 3, 38 and 40.

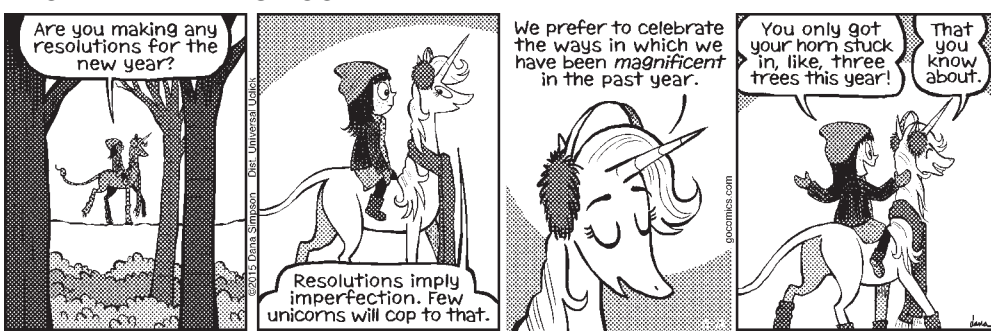
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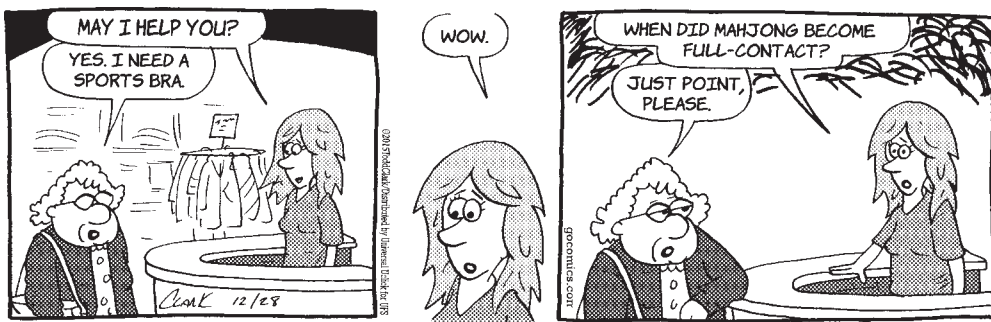
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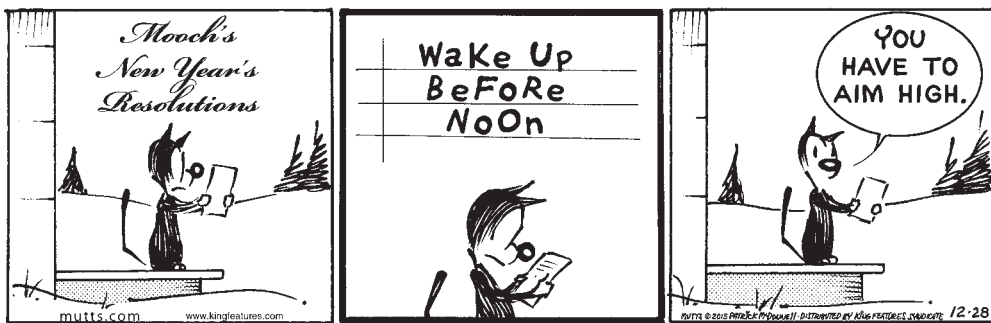
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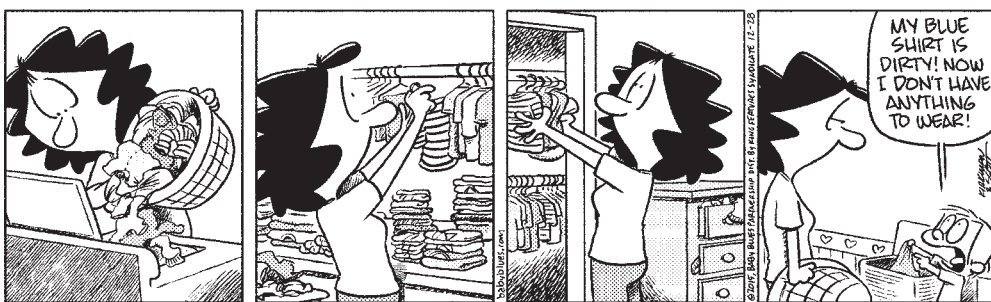
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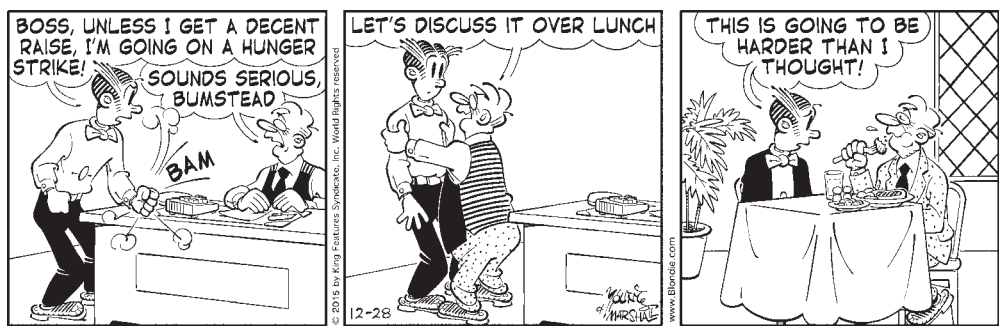
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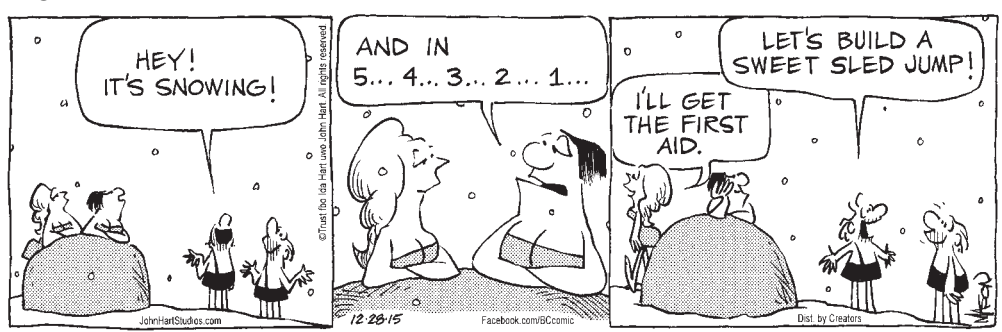
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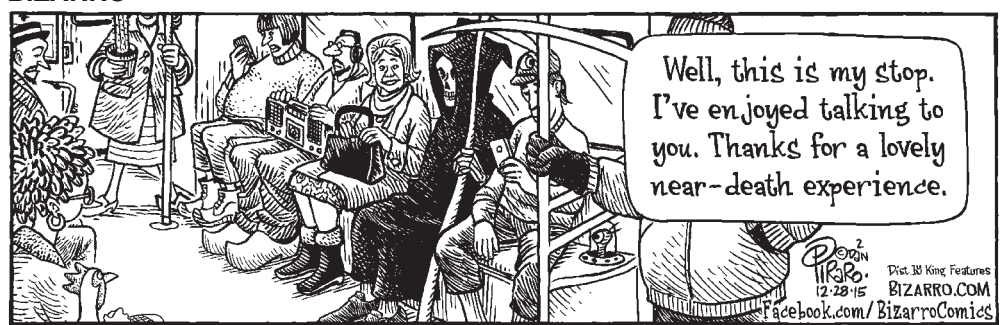
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