

Friend's influence isn't appropriate Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: My lifelong friend "Georgia" has a 7-year-old son who frequently plays with my 6-year-old. Georgia and her husband are divorced and share custody. The problem is, I fear her son is being exposed to things that are not appropriate for his age. He plays adult video games, and both parents allow him to watch frightening, sexually suggestive adult TV shows. The boy has made several inappropriate comments and gestures to me. The father doesn't seem to notice.

I do not want my son exposed to any of this. But I also want to help Georgia's son, as I feel this could have damaging long-term effects. My son adores this boy and gets upset when I try to discourage interaction between them. Georgia lives nearby, and when her son is at her house, it is difficult to keep them apart. Any advice? — *Growing Up Way Too Fast*

Dear Growing: Some single parents are so overwhelmed with parenting responsibilities and guilt about the separation that they set no boundaries for their children. They think this makes the child happy, but in reality, it undermines the child's level of security — if Mommy and Daddy don't care what he does, does that mean they don't love him?

Please talk to Georgia. Tell her that these things are inappropriate for her son and it makes it difficult for you to allow him to play with your child. But ultimately, you cannot control what Georgia

Annie's Mailbox

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Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



does. You can only explain to your son that these things will not be tolerated by you. Do not let him go to Georgia's home without your supervision. When the children are with you, make sure they are not playing R-rated video games or watching adult programming. And limit contact when you can.

Dear Annie: I am always being compared to my older sister. I am 14, and whenever I get bad grades, they always say, "Be more like your sister."

I hate it and am sick and tired of it. No one understands. I try my best, but I still get compared to her. What do I do? — *Desperate for Answers*

Dear Desperate: Many parents like to compare their children, although we have yet to see any positive results come from that. The kids are more likely to resent each other, as well as their parents. Is there a school counselor or favorite teacher you can talk to about this? What about an adult relative or neighbor? It

would help for you to discuss this with someone who can be understanding and who also might be willing to talk to your parents about it.

Dear Annie: I would like to add to your response to "Actively Confused," whose wife had cancer and now resents her husband's activities.

In my 45 years as a hospital chaplain, I have known many people who accept and adjust to life-threatening illness, often in quite surprising and courageous fashion. Others view themselves as victims or seek "secondary gain" through their illness. This is not a judgment on them. They, like "Actively Confused's" wife, are dealing with their situation the best way they know.

Your suggestion that they speak to her oncologist is a good start. But she and her husband also need education, counseling and support. Some oncologists have social workers and counselors on their staffs. Some make referrals to chaplains or to peer support groups. This couple could benefit from guidance that will help them become active fighters, advocates for themselves and teammates in the treatment process.

Keep up your good work, Annie. You are a godsend for those who reach out to you. — *Chaplain Jack*

Dear Chaplain Jack: Thank you for the kind words and the excellent addition to our advice.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You've built up plenty of goodwill, and now it's your turn to relax. They might not remember all the things you did, but they will definitely remember how you made them feel.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You might be surprised at whom you'll influence. You can be sure that the impression you make will travel long distances and extend far into the future, too.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're generous now — maybe too generous. Think twice before you share to prevent yourself from accidentally giving away what you should have kept for yourself.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Use reverse psychology. People will want what they think they can't have. Create a sense of scarcity around what you're offering. When something is too abundant, it will be perceived as common and undesirable.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Make big plans, because without them, you'll be reacting to life instead of creating it. Not all of your plans will work out, but you'll sure be better off for having made them.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). If you don't believe something should be yours, then you won't be able to obtain it. Work on your own feelings of worthiness. You really do deserve this, and the only one keeping you from it is you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You can't help it that you're drawn to highly competitive arenas. But with your high level of focus, you put the odds in your favor. You'll spend many tireless hours on the same activity until a breakthrough is inevitable.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). When people are not understanding you, it's natural to want to repeat yourself, loudly. However, such a tactic won't work. You need new words instead. Change your language and approach.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You can't help but wonder whether life would have been different had you made another choice. Rest assured, you made the right choice then, and today brings a kind of proof you'll find quite satisfying.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You have so much on your mind that socializing might not seem like a huge priority. But make a weekend plan anyway — you'll be glad when Saturday comes around.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Where you spend your time will be crucial to the way relationships develop. A comfortable environment will allow you to shine. If you're not comfortable, it will be better to leave than to try to make things work.

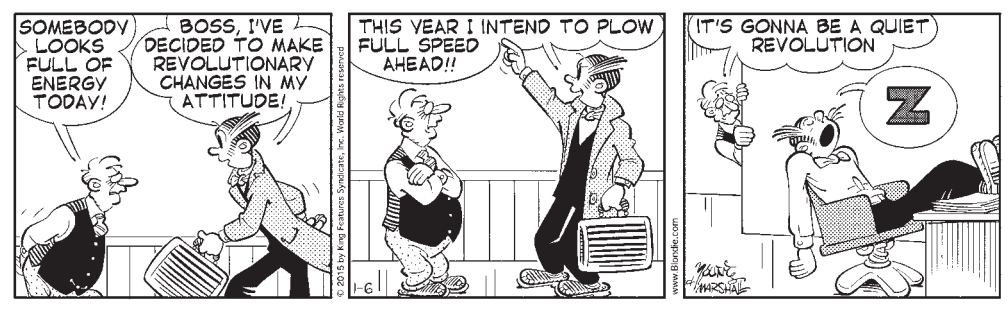
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Today brings a chase of some kind. Don't assume anything about the thing or person you're after. This situation will require you to be fully aware and on your game.

WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 7). Instead of focusing on improving yourself, put your energy into knowing and leaning on your strengths. This month is a high point in your personal life, and you'll grow in confidence in the early part of the year. February will throw you a professional curveball. April and July will bring magical travel experiences. Cancer and Pisces people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 40, 12, 1, 38 and 16.

FRANK AND ERNEST



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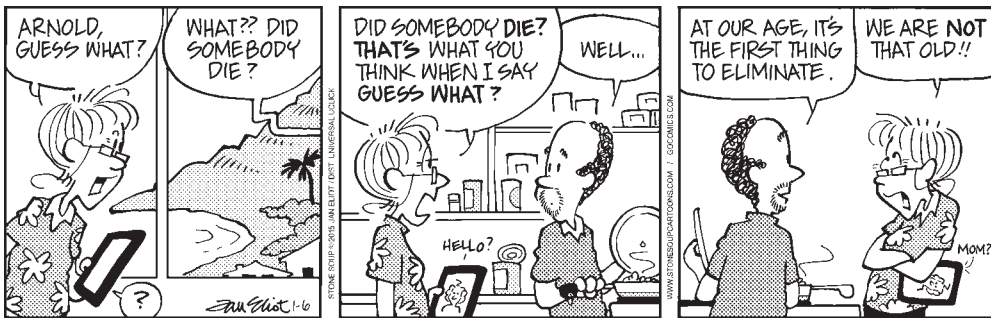
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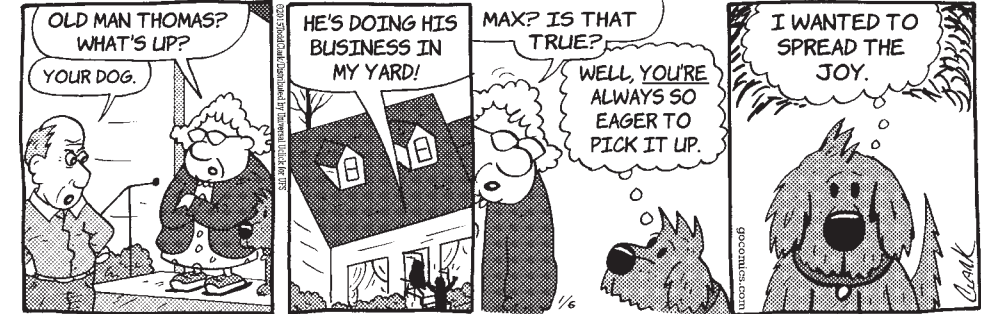
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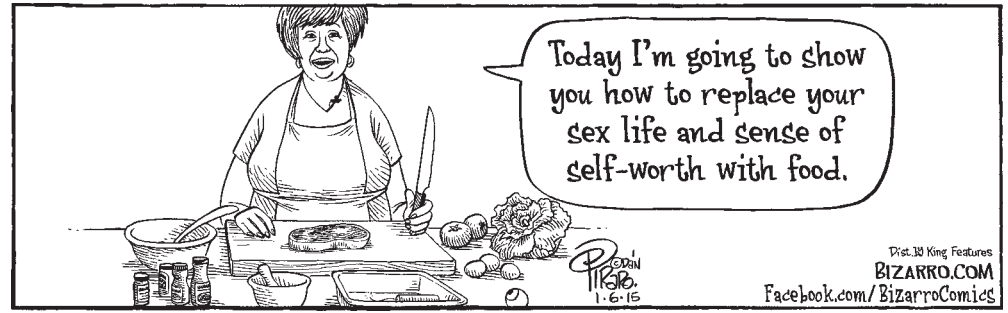
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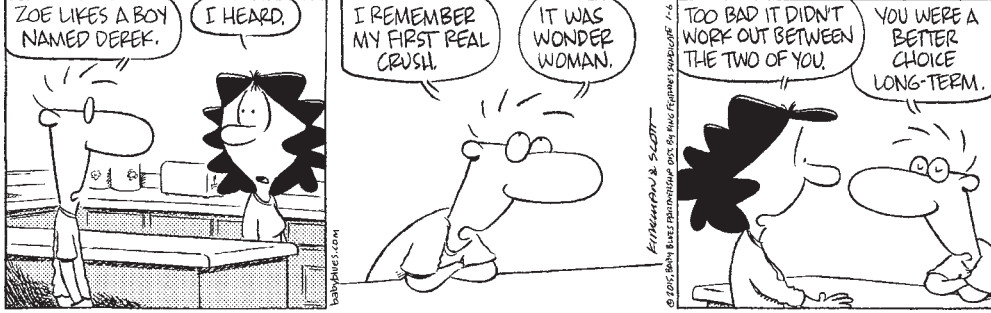
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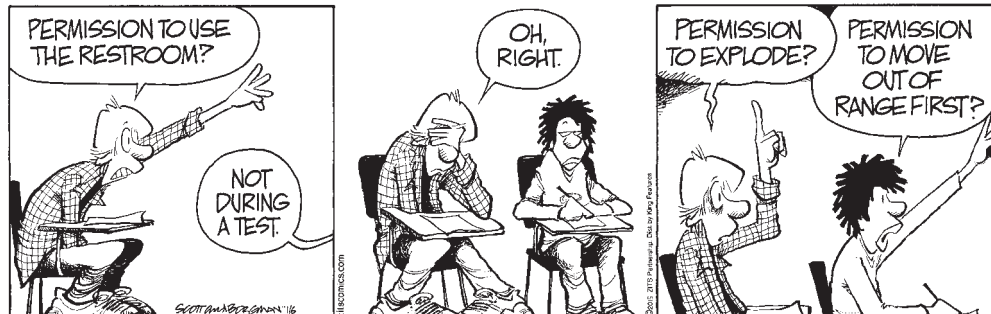
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