

Homeless sister needs help Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: I have three siblings. The youngest sister, "Jess," has always had problems. At 13, she started taking drugs and running away from home. She spent five years in prison, and when she got out, my older sister offered to let Jess live with her so she could get a job and go to school.

Jess was OK for about 18 months. Then she developed back problems and was unable to work. After several disagreements with my sister, she moved out to live with her boyfriend, whom she later married. It's been downhill from there.

A few nights before Thanksgiving, Jess knocked on my door with her husband and their dog. Apparently, they are homeless. Neither of them can stick to a job on a regular basis. I'm sure Jess suffers from some type of mental illness, and now I think her husband does, too. I told Jess she could stay for three months and then would have to leave.

I hope she can get some assistance to help her get back on her feet. Do you have any guidance for me? — *Lost and Confused*

Dear Lost: It is compassionate of you to take in your sister and her family, but she needs more help than you can give her. The best thing you can do for Jess is to look into local social services that will help her and her husband with mental health counseling, job training

Annie's Mailbox

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Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



and housing. Please contact the National Alliance on Mental Illness (nami.org), the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development homeless assistance (hud.gov/homeless) and the National Coalition for the Homeless (nationalhomeless.org).

Dear Annie: My 29-year-old stepson refuses to give gifts to family members at Christmas. A few years ago, I asked him why, and he said he doesn't believe in the crass commercialism at Christmas. Yet he and his wife accept gifts from all of us on the holiday.

He also doesn't send a card or phone on his Dad's birthday or mine. What do we do? Do we respect his views on commercialism and not give him gifts? Do we ignore it and hope he comes around? He and his wife earn plenty of money and can afford it. But that's beside the point. It is the effort and caring that is lacking. — *Wondering*

Dear Wondering: It is perfectly logical to stop buying presents for him, saying, "We know you don't support the crass commercialism of the holiday, so we are respecting your beliefs and not purchasing any gifts for you." Of course, that won't help the relationship, which seems a little strained. This is your stepson, so Dad should handle it. Has Dad told him how much it would mean to get a call or card on his birthday? Some kids simply don't connect the dots or realize the importance of remembering a loved one's special day. It helps to remind them. Gently.

Dear Annie: This is in response to "PO'd in New York," who said you two "need a lobotomy" for telling readers that doggie paw prints don't belong on a sympathy card.

Annie, I have had pets, mostly cats, since I was 6 years old. I have a pet cemetery in my backyard where five of my beloved cats are buried. I have two pet rescue cats whom I love with all my heart. They are a part of my family. But I would never, ever sign their names or put their paw prints on a sympathy card. In fact, I would be terribly upset if someone sent me a sympathy card with their animal's names and paw prints on it.

I just had to let you know that not every animal lover agrees with "PO'd." — *A Cat Lover in Connecticut*

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You don't have to put people to the test to sense which ones are good for you. Affirm to yourself who your allies are because utilizing your alliances will help you succeed in the next 48 hours.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). It's too general to say that you trust one person or don't trust another. Understanding who people are and how they are likely to behave is much more useful than blanket statements of trust or distrust.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). It's said that you're not supposed to awaken people who are sleepwalking. Similarly, it could be dangerous to offer too much outside reality to one who is living very much within a bubble of personal reality.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Your social landscape is changing. Instead of offering signs of approval, try empathy. Ask the questions that might help you better understand how another person walks this world.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Does self-improvement have to be such an endless quest? You may simply not be in the mood for it today. As Winston Churchill said: "He has all of the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire."

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Even though you've done nothing wrong, those who misunderstand you could ask you to defend yourself. If you think you might be put on the stand, prepare a case for yourself beforehand.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Some responsibilities do not need to be taken on, and others cannot be avoided and therefore should be accepted immediately. Knowing the difference takes wisdom, which you definitely possess.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Just because you have a right to do a thing doesn't mean you should. There are many considerations to factor into today's decisions, not the least of which have to do with the feelings of others.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). While the gurus spout the glories of being "authentically you" and "living your truth," the reality is that relating well to a variety of other humans takes specialized skills that must be learned. At first it will feel like an act.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). When the laws of supply and demand don't seem to be working in your favor, get creative. You're truly brilliant in your ability to manage the equation to better suit you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Instead of avoiding negative feelings, dive right in to whatever is bothering you. Dealing directly with your challenges will liberate you. A moment of unpleasantness will be followed by hours of relief.

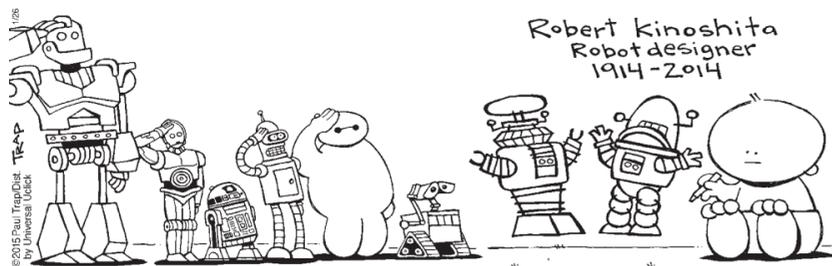
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You can plan this day to a point, but leave yourself exit strategies too, and be willing to bail on the plan when spontaneous opportunity arises (and it will).

TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 27). Besides putting in the work to get use out of the intellectual abundance of your birthright, you'll also apply emotional and spiritual intelligence to create the personal life of your dreams. February brings a financial breakthrough. You'll receive visitors in May and make memories. You'll make an important promise in September. Cancer and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 40, 22, 14, 39 and 50.

FRANK AND ERNEST



THATABABY



STONE SOUP



LOLA



SIX CHIX



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ZITS



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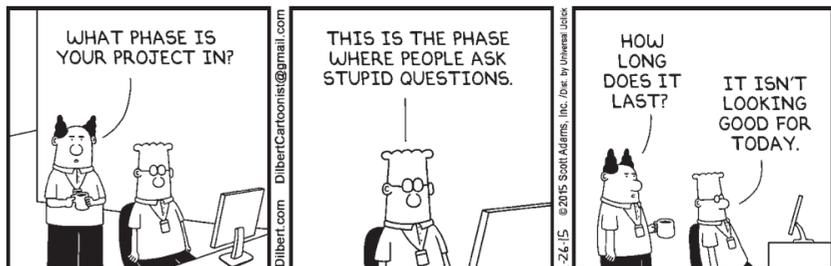
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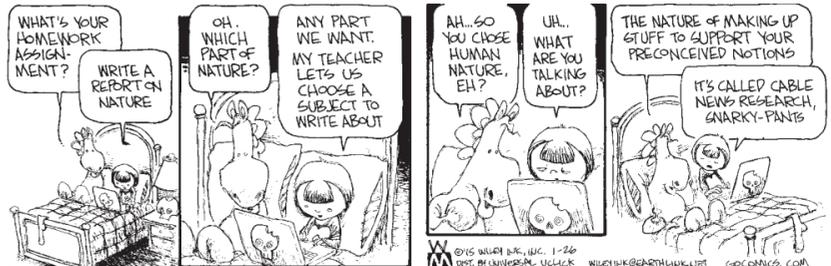
DILBERT



BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

