

Woman ponders cutting out mom Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: When I was growing up, we were all afraid of my mother. My own kids recently confessed that when they were little they were always afraid of Grandma because they never knew when she would completely lose it and take it out on them.

My mother seldom takes any interest in my kids except to find fault. When my teenage daughter recently went through a severe depression, I told her she might be understanding because my father committed suicide. Instead, she gave me a long lecture about all the things my husband and I were doing wrong. I told her she was cruel and hung up. I thought she might apologize, but she never did.

My husband and I moved across the country several years ago, but we still visit and stay at Mom's house several times a year. We didn't invite her to my children's high school and college graduations because the kids said they'd rather not have Grandma attend. Because we already live so far away, I'm tempted to put an end to whatever connection we have. I think that would be best for my children and also for me. We have so many sentimental notions about grandmothers. I kept hoping mine would act like

Annie's Mailbox

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one of those, but it has taken me this long to see that she is not capable of it.

Here's the problem: I worry that my youngest child, who doesn't know her grandmother that well, will think we deprived her of this relationship. My mother has shown more tolerance toward my youngest, saying this child is the only one who likes her. Should I keep in touch for my daughter's sake? I feel terrible knowing that I was in complete denial about her when the older two were growing up. What if my mother can't behave any better toward this one? — *Worried Daughter*

Dear Worried: You live across the country, so this does not have to be an all-or-nothing solution. It's possible your mother will have a better relationship with your youngest child, although you'll need to keep an eye on it. Instead of cutting

her off entirely, we suggest you try shortening your visits and having fewer of them. Once a year for three or four days is sufficient, and if possible, stay in a hotel.

Mom sounds as though she could benefit from therapy, but you cannot force her to do that. You can, however, help your children understand that Grandma has issues of her own and sometimes doesn't behave appropriately. Your kids are old enough to learn how to cope with her. And by the way, if your father committed suicide and your daughter suffers from depression, we hope you have spoken to her doctor about a possible genetic link.

Dear Annie: Your advice to "Played for a Fool" was good, but it wouldn't have helped me. My two stepchildren owe us thousands of dollars. They were offered the money with the condition that it be paid back monthly, and the amount was affordable.

However, if the parents of these children feel no obligation to collect, any deal is moot. The children are essentially stealing, and it is their character that is in question. It destroys trust, and I find it difficult to spend time with them, especially when I hear about what they bought with my money. — *Smarter Now*

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The sad truth is that there are some people who would rather not hear about your happiness. Your careful choice of conversational topics (with consideration of your company) is a good part of your charm.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Much of your baggage is unnecessary. Unburden yourself. It will be easier to do in today's emotional weather. In life and in swimming, it's better if you don't have much to carry.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You gravitate toward the comfortable, predictable pattern. However, today's disruption won't allow it. Your powers of adaptation are extraordinarily strong, mind you. You'll be used to the new way in no time.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It's the talents that you don't even consider talents that will get you noticed in a favorable light today — for instance, your talent for knowing where things are or for remembering passwords.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The powers of creation and destruction run on different timetables. What takes years to build can be destroyed in a single moment. Some degree of destructive energy is necessary for creation to happen, but it is a very small amount.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're better for having experienced an ideal moment, but don't dwell there. You'll be happier when you embrace the changing state of things instead of clinging to that perfect piece of past.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). No one can dispute your fine taste, though you may privately take issue with the aesthetic choices of others. You might find a loved one's preferences in food, reading or fun quite astonishing.

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SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). People do what comes naturally or what they have been educated to do. Nature is difficult to fight, but you can reeducate yourself and others. This will be the main challenge of the day.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Unfortunately, waiting for the happy moments will not make them show up today. So don't wait. Your smile will make you joyful, and the rest will follow.

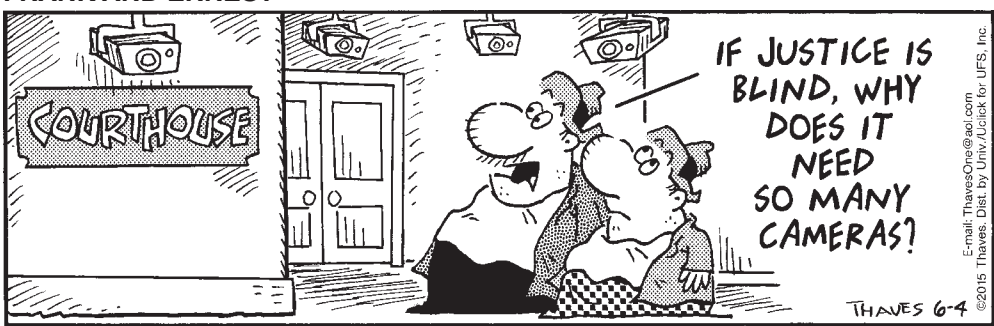
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Don't categorically rule anything out. Luck changes moment-to-moment, day-to-day. You could win at yesterday's losing game. Test your daring.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll be like the doctor standing by to help bring a new life into the world. The "life" in question may or may not require your help, but all are better off because you decided to assist in this transition.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). There's a difference between running away and distancing yourself from forces of negativity. You put barriers in place, not because you're scared, but because you're smart.

FRIDAY'S BIRTHDAY (June 5). There's no need to fear that you'll lose your resources. There is a well in your life that will never dry up as long as you're willing to adjust your rope appropriately to reach what you need. Now through August is rich in fun and excitement. September shows you signing a contract. October brings a new investor or partner. Cancer and Taurus people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 11, 24, 38 and 13.

FRANK AND ERNEST



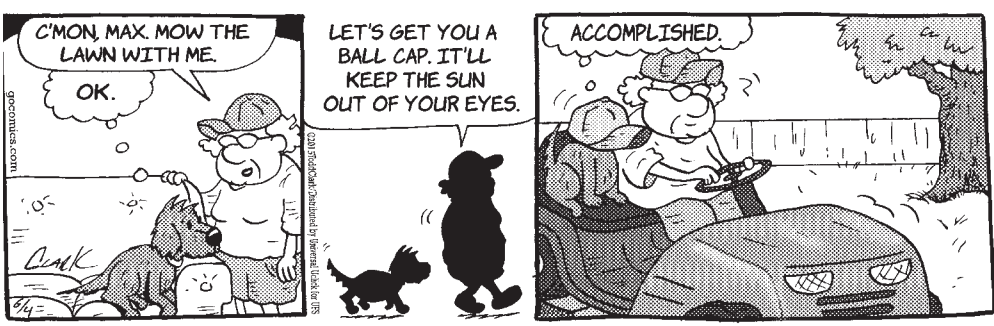
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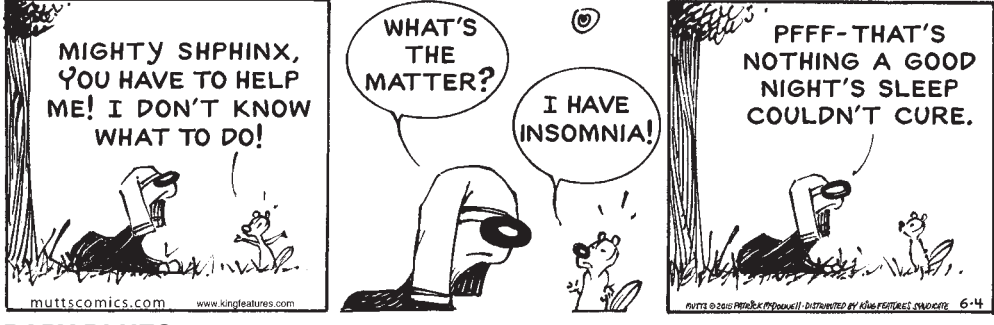
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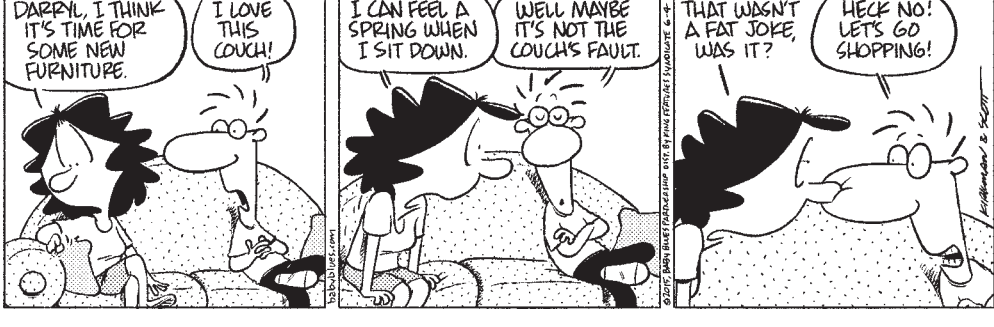
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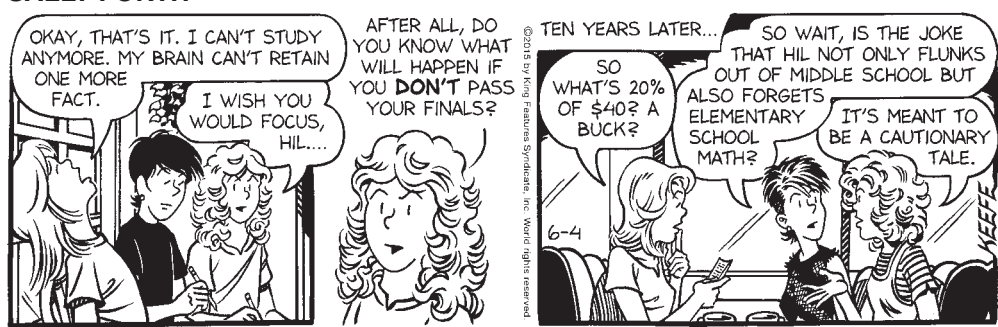
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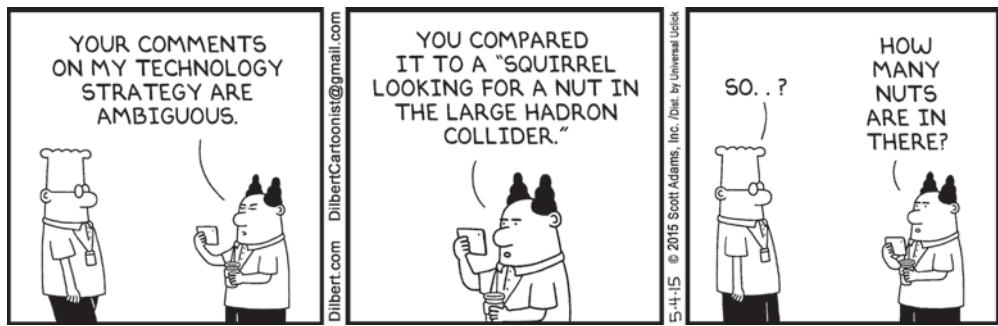
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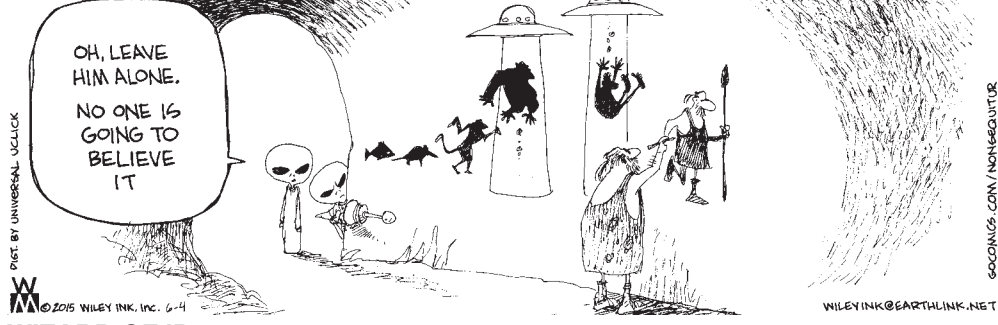
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