

# A little distance might help

**Dear Annie:** My father has always been especially unkind to my sister, "Portia." She always has had behavioral problems, not to mention she is a bit paranoid and has a ferocious temper. Portia also drinks too much and continues to contact her abusive ex-boyfriend.

My older sister and I try to show Portia lots of love, but Dad usually deals with her problems with anger, insults and general vitriol. Though he has occasionally shown her support over the years, he usually singles her out as the "problem" child. There have been times when he has screamed and even intervened physically when my sisters have fought, always pinning the blame on Portia.

Recently, Dad's anger has grown and he reacts testily to every comment or question Portia makes. He even reacts poorly to my mother, and is now talking about moving in with his sister in another state until his depression and anxiety subside.

Dad's behavior seems really disturbing to me and borders on abuse. Yet my mother submits over and over to his anger. What should we do? — *Afraid of Escalation*



**Dear Afraid:** There's not much you can do for your mother, who doesn't see this as a serious problem. She is accustomed to Dad's moods and prefers to avoid confrontation. Would your father see a doctor about his depression and anxiety instead of waiting for them to "subside" on their own? Portia's issues may be genetically linked to her father's, and she also is likely to benefit from both medical intervention and therapy.

If your father wishes to move in with his sister for a while, then that will provide an opportunity for everyone to calm down. Dad obviously recognizes that he has a problem and that a little distance can help. Perhaps his sister will convince him to talk to his doctor.

**Dear Annie:** I'm responding to "Feeling Unloved," the divorced dad whose teenaged kids don't

seem to want to spend time with him:

First and foremost, if your kids are angry or resentful, encourage them to talk about it and simply listen without being defensive or blaming the other parent. It hurts, and it's hard to hear, but it's what they need. They are kids navigating a difficult situation they feel powerless to change.

Second, remember that they are teenagers. Most teenagers can be a bit self-centered and focused on friends rather than family.

Finally, don't expect them to call you. Invite them places, even if it's out for pizza. And if they decline, then ask them when would be a good time. And don't give up. It will get better. — *G.*

**Dear G.:** Thank you for your sage advice. Navigating parenthood with teenagers is already complicated, and divorce adds to the difficulty. If the parents were living together, they could see the situation more clearly, but separated, they aren't certain what's going on. They sometimes blame the child or the other parent for a change in the relationship, but often it is simply growing pains. Teenagers require a revised play-book.

# Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** If love is your school you will graduate with honors. When a relationship settles into a groove, don't be quick to call it a rut. Be proud of your perseverance and savor the comfort of getting along.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** There are times when being organized makes the difference between success and failure — not now. The world won't wait for you to process, sort and file, so just dive into the glorious mess. You'll discover treasure.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** Your friends will baffle you. The reason their actions don't make sense is that you don't have the full story. Be fine with that. You'll learn what you need to know in time. For now, just send your compassion.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** You'll start a lively conversation — so lively that ending it may be a problem. This is the perfect excuse to collect contact info and make a new friend so the fun is to-be-continued...

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Everyone has a job to do today. You take yours seriously, and some of the others seem to think nothing of drifting off course with nothing to show for it. Your biggest challenge will be keeping your cool.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Some things are important to do, and some things are nice to do. Your main problem today is that you believe that it's important to do what's nice to do, and therefore your to-do list is too full. There's always tomorrow.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** There are lots of solutions out there, but the right one for you may be uncommon. You're different from your loved ones, neighbors and colleagues. This is the ideal time

to experiment and find what works for you. **SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** One study suggested that the average person gets distracted over 30 times an hour. If you're testy with your interrupters it's because you pride yourself on being productive. Take measures to shut out the world for a while.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Stubbornness is for the young, the ignorant and the person who senses that the leader is an idiot. None of those applies to you today. You'll comply with the orders so that when it's your turn, you'll lead with confidence.

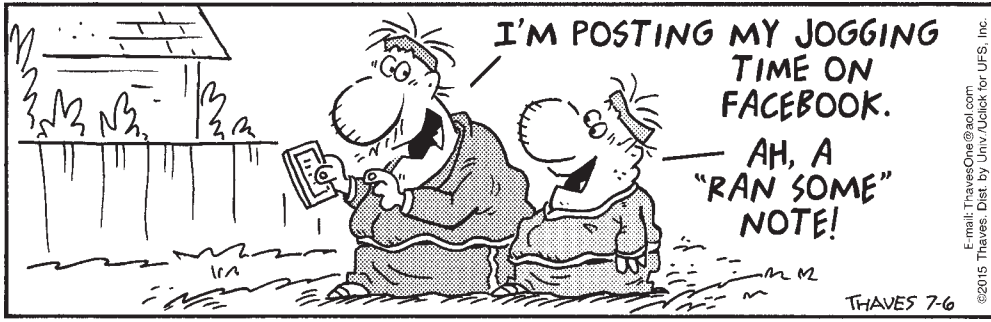
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** No one likes to get sucker-punched by life. And yet, everyone seems to like people who've had the experience and triumphed past it. If you're down, keep going in the knowledge that you truly will be better for it.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Complicated people have a way of complicating even the simplest of tasks. Avoid them. Do this at the first red flag because it will be easy then. If you wait until red flag two or three, you'll be stuck.

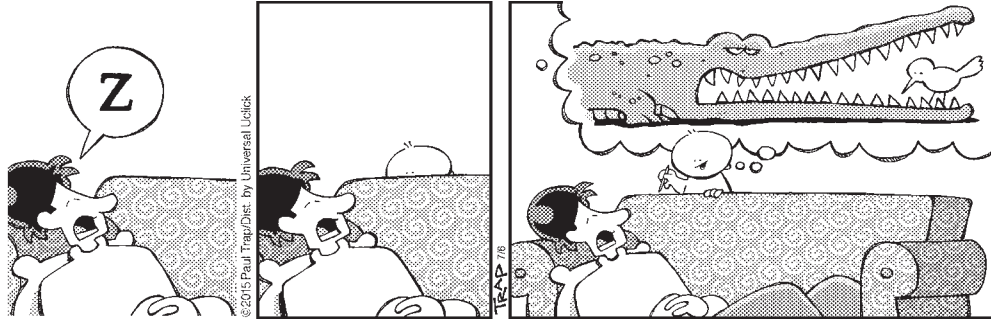
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Even if you're feeling a little needy today, don't give into it. Make the effort to rise and shine and do your duty. Caring for others will be more fulfilling than letting them care for you.

**TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (JULY 7).** Your solar return gifts you with the power to release an old pattern that no longer suits you. The love of family and friends will make you feel unstoppable. Events in the next 10 weeks open you to magic. You might even fall deeply in love. Wherever you go in October, revelry will follow you. Scorpio and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 47, 1, 28, 14 and 9.

## FRANK AND ERNEST



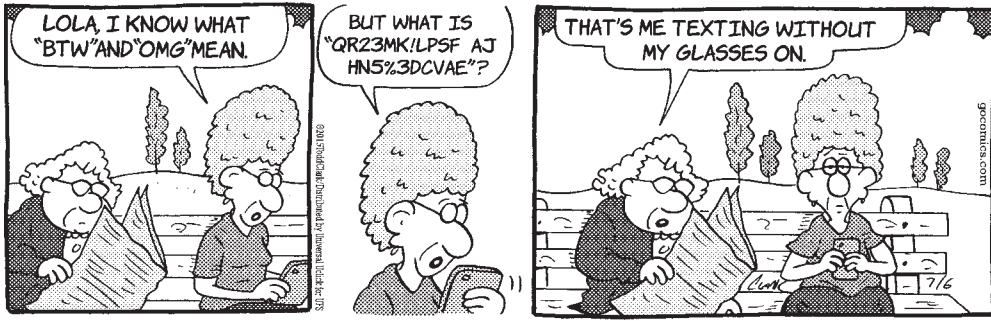
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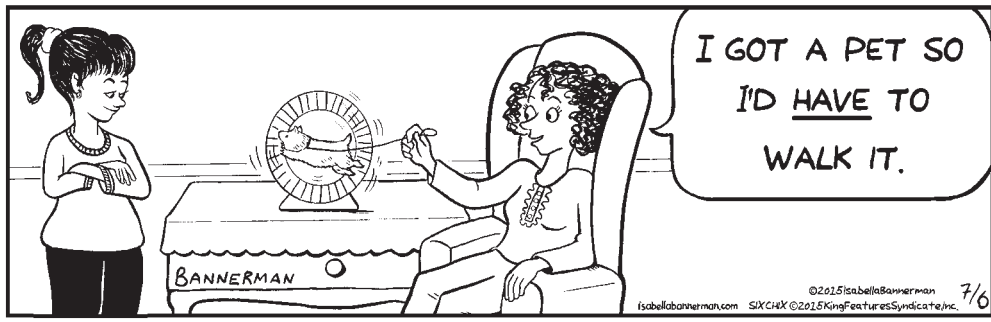
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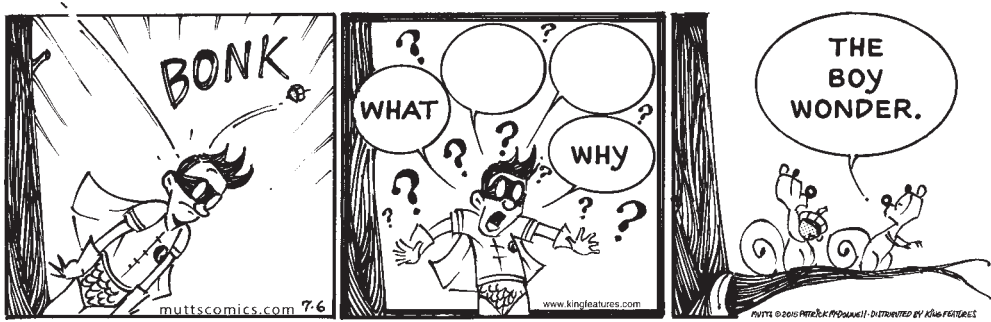
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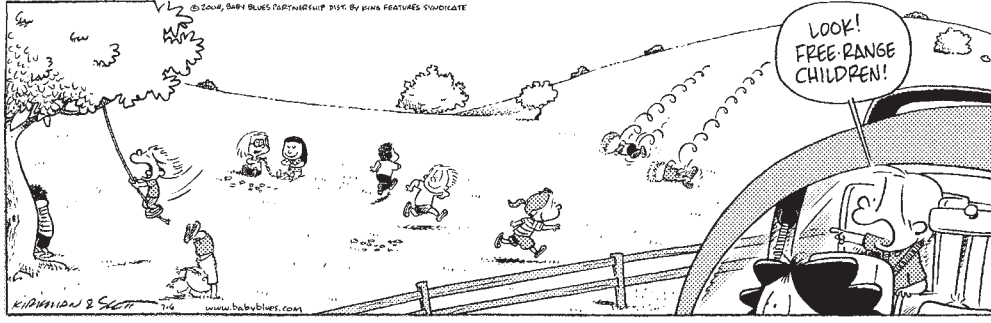
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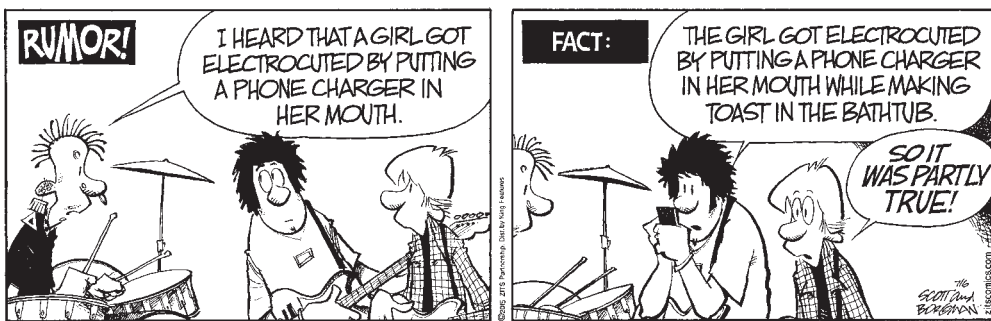
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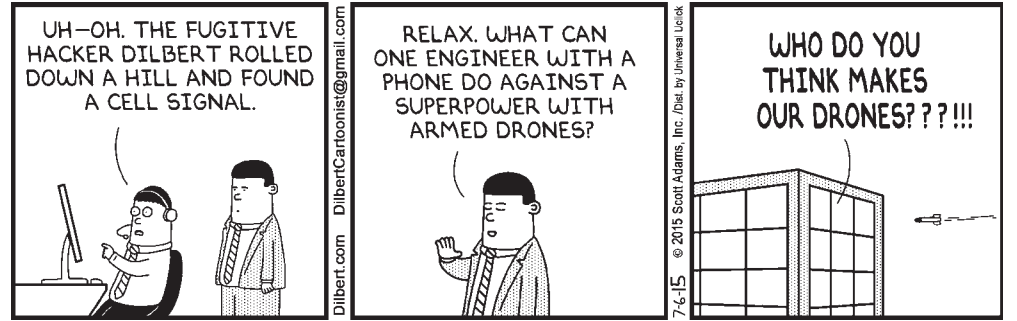
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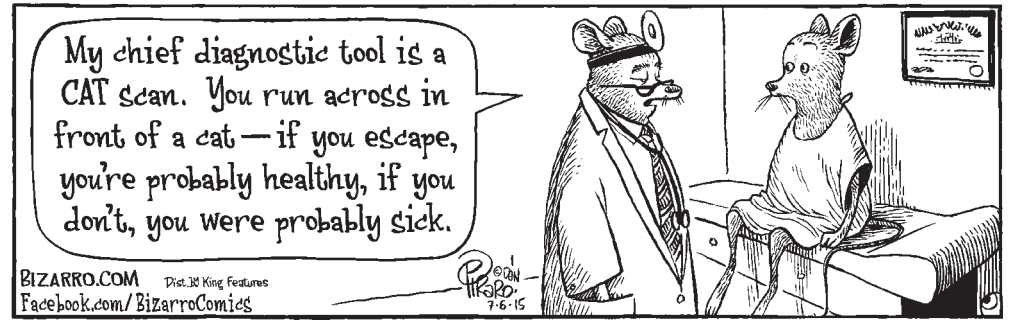
## B.C.



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## WIZARD OF ID



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