

Neglected friend feels bad Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: How do you cope with a friendship where the person stays connected just enough to continually remind you of how unimportant you are?

I have a friend with whom I was once quite close. We exercised and ran errands together, and when she was seriously ill, I spent countless hours visiting, reading to her and just being there. I donated to her charities, sang in her choir, and we always had fun together.

But after I was diagnosed with the same illness (now recovered), she visited me only twice and now seems too busy to get together. That would be bad enough. But the real problem is that she texts me often to say how much she misses me or to ask for a favor, but apparently never wants to see me. It's a sad reminder of how little she is willing to do to maintain the friendship.

We live in a small town and I can't cut her off without repercussions. Is my only option to simply live with the disappointment? — *Friend in Need*

Dear Friend: You have another option: Talk to her about it. Not everyone is good about friendship maintenance. Some people become so busy that they neglect

Annie's Mailbox

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people who are otherwise important to them, and don't recognize that this behavior is hurtful. For them, texting becomes a convenient substitute for face-to-face interactions that require scheduling and organization.

You won't know whether this is the case unless you ask your friend directly. We hope she will be completely honest about the reasons for her dismissive attitude. At the very least, you will be able to determine how much she cares by how sincerely apologetic she is and whether she does anything to remedy the situation. After all, what do you have to lose?

Dear Annie: My granddaughter just hosted a birthday party for her year-old baby with 100 people in attendance. The child was lavished with beautiful, expensive

gifts. When I asked my granddaughter if she had written thank-you notes for the lovely presents, she informed me that "this isn't done for birthdays" and the subject was closed.

I am livid over this pompous act of entitlement by my usually kind and thoughtful grandchild. But this is a pattern I have seen with lots of children who were never taught how to express gratitude well, and this lack of training is passing to the next generation.

I have come up with a solution that I can live with. I am having "Thank You" notes printed with my grandchildren's names, adding Forever stamps and handing them out at Christmas. — *R.J.*

Dear R.J.: We hope this works for you, but we aren't optimistic. Nonetheless, your granddaughter isn't entirely wrong. Birthday gifts that are opened in front of the givers with appropriate verbal thanks offered at the time do not require a written thank-you note afterward, although that is always a nice touch and makes a good impression. What we find tacky is the lavish birthday party for a year-old baby that includes 100 guests.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You've gotten good at relating to people who are very different from you. Your style works in multiple circumstances. Your soft words spoken with firm confidence will produce impressive results.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). What you don't understand far exceeds what you do understand. Recognizing all you don't know is a mark of high intelligence. As for what you do know, you'll be asked to teach some of that today.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You may feel that your efforts are neither focused nor persistent enough to make a difference. But it's the fact that you're making an effort at all that makes the biggest difference.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). When it comes to being you, you're the master. Others will make suggestions that you're not too keen on following. You're not beholden to anyone and only have to please yourself.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Arrogance is the daddy of all sins. Belittling others is a sign of feeling little inside. When dealing with victims of a superiority complex, just remember that pride is often the hallmark of those with the least to be proud of.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). If you can't change your mind, you can't change anything. That's why any effort you make to expand your realm of influence should be considered important, even if it seems more like play than work.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your thoughts of a certain person make you forget to do the ordinary things you would usually do. That's how you can tell you're smitten. And when you're smitten with the same person for a very long time, it's even more wondrous.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You have the bright ideas today. But you also have a difficult group of strong-willed people to contend with. When you make it seem like their idea, they like it more.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You wouldn't be trying if you didn't care. That's what they sense from you now. So don't worry too much about whether you're saying or doing it right. It's a beautiful day when your good intentions effortlessly shine through.

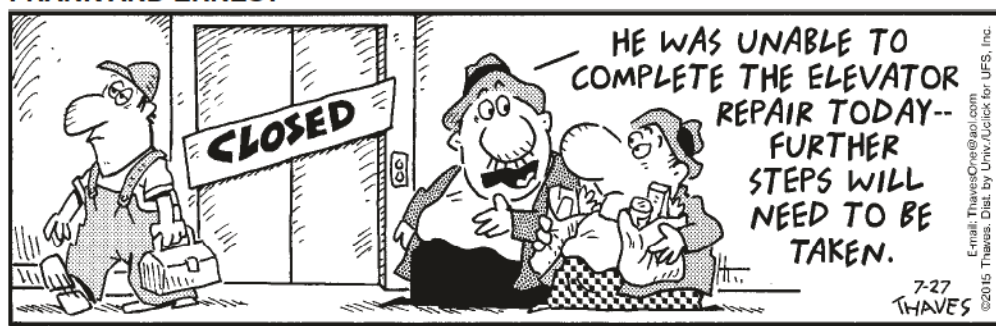
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You're not dreaming it. There really is a lack of organized creativity out there. You're just the one to capture and apply the stellar ideas before they drift off into the ether.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Reconsider your contacts. It's not who you know; it's who you can influence. Knowing someone doesn't count for much if that person isn't willing to support, help and generally act like a friend.

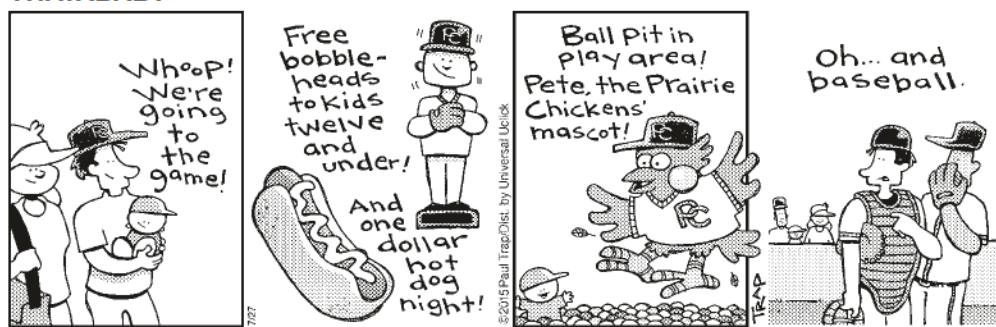
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The thing about achieving exceptional accomplishments is that after a brief moment of glory you begin to worry about what they'll expect from you next. Keep doing the work that makes you happy.

TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (July 28). Your loved ones will consider you to be among the brightest and strongest they know, and you'll spend much of the year living up to the reputation. That's why it's so important to take time for yourself over the next six weeks. Rest and revel in fun. September brings a career boost. October introduces you to new friends. Aries and Sagittarius people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 12, 14, 17 and 38.

FRANK AND ERNEST



THATABABY



STONE SOUP



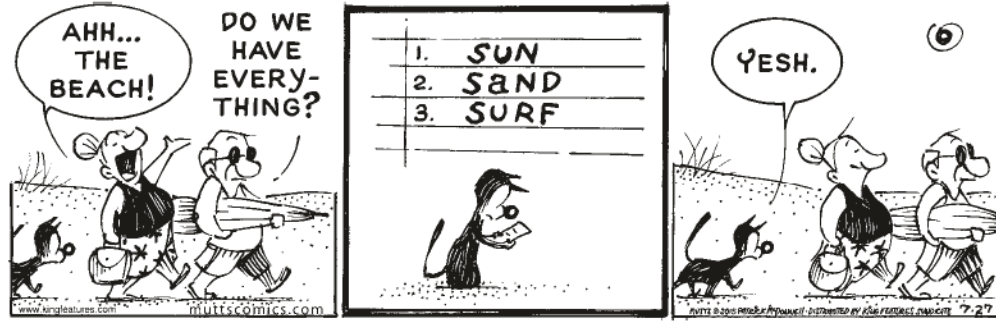
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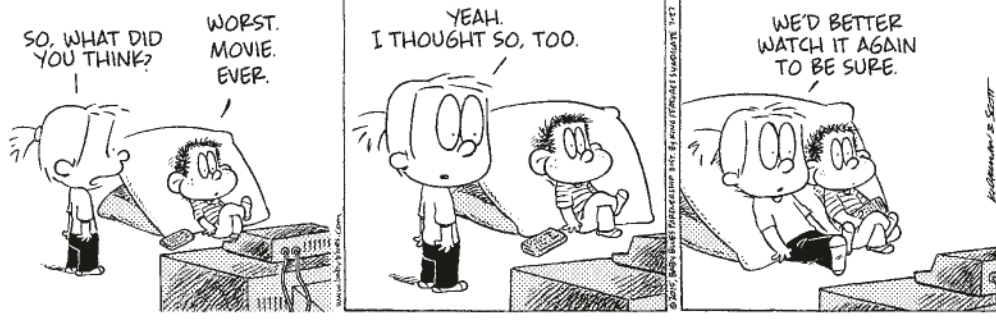
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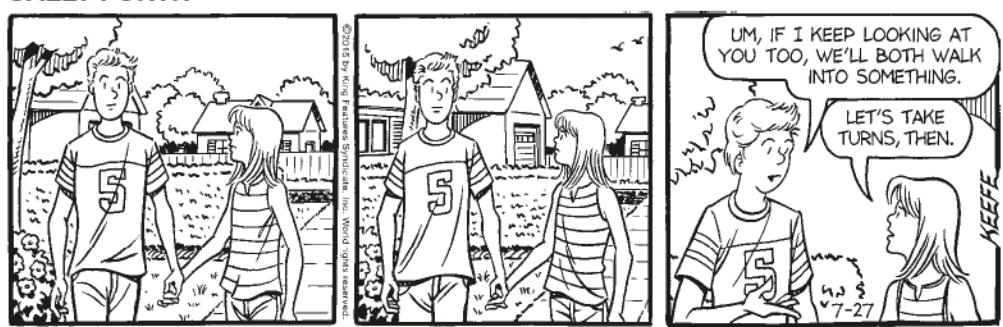
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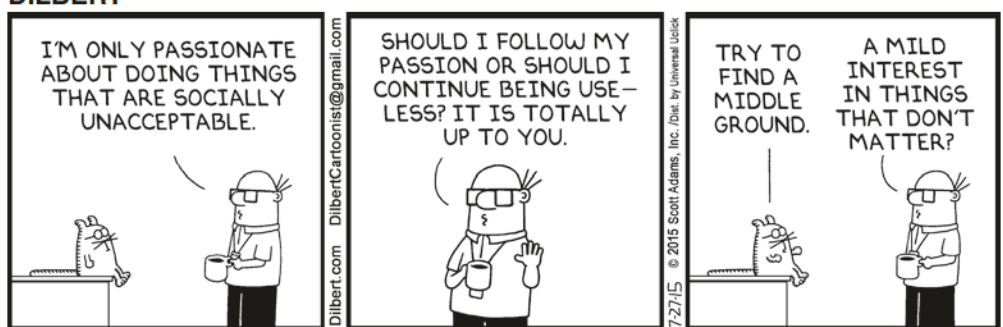
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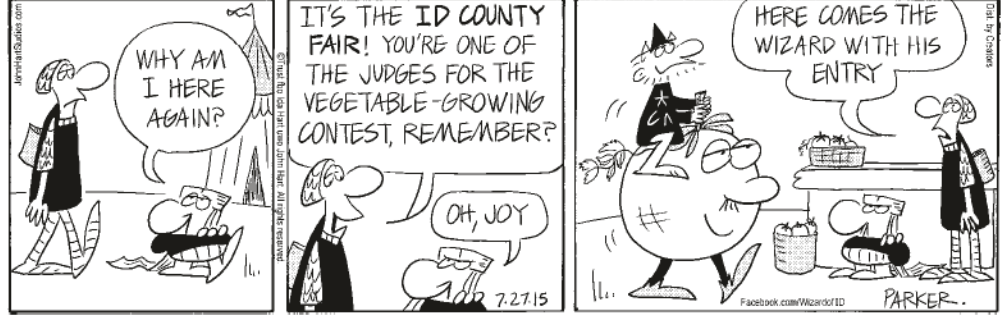
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ROSE IS ROSE

