

Son won't visit elderly mom

Dear Annie: My wife and I are nearly 90 years old. Five months ago, she had a stroke and has since been residing in a nursing home. We both come from small families. Everyone has visited my wife except for our oldest son.

I called my older son and asked when he was going to see his mother. His response was a tirade, saying, "Who are you to tell me when to visit?" and "You never listen to whatever I tell you," along with, "The others live closer and it takes me six hours to drive there." I told him that I have a lot of things on my mind and cannot listen to his outburst, and then I hung up.

There is public transportation from his city to his mother's location. We've never had a conflict prior to this outburst. Until now, he had been visiting three or four times a year. As a result of our age and health, we have not visited his home for the past few years.

Our younger son is very supportive in helping us and visits frequently. However, he is reluctant to get involved in an altercation between his brother and us. How do we get our son to realize what he is doing to his parents? — *Frustrated*

Annie's Mailbox

Creators
Syndicate Inc.
Kathy Mitchell
and
Marcy Sugar



Dear Frustrated: We don't know if there are some issues between your son and your wife, or whether your son simply cannot deal with his mother being in a nursing home. Either way, you cannot force him to visit, even though, obviously, he should. Instead, phone him and say, gently, "I realize how difficult it is for you to come to the nursing home. Whenever you can make it, I know your mother would love to see you, and so would I." That's it. No arguing or pressuring. The rest is up to him.

Dear Annie: My boyfriend has been divorced for 33 years. Still, he and his ex-wife find excuses to continue to communicate about their grown sons.

Recently, I got excited about getting one son a gift for his 35th birthday. My boyfriend said they

"don't do gifts around here." So I gave it up. Then I found out that he had gone in on a gift with his ex and another son.

Why do you think he had to lie to me about it? Should I take it as a clue and move on? — *On the Outside Looking In*

Dear Outside: First of all, it is normal for divorced parents to communicate about their grown children until the end of time. It is only a problem if one of the ex-partners has designs on the other or if they are overly involved in one another's lives.

Lying about a gift, however, is worrisome. Your boyfriend may have lied because he thought you'd be angry that he made arrangements with his ex, but that doesn't excuse his behavior. It only undermines your trust, making you wonder what other things he may be doing with the ex, and whether he wants to exclude you from his family. These are the things you need to talk to him about. If he won't discuss these issues, or cannot give you satisfactory answers, it's time for counseling or goodbye — whichever you think will provide a sense of security for you.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). This is when you're the best worker: when the work provides challenge, adventure and the opportunity to meet new people and see new lands. When it doesn't provide those things, you get restless.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). There's no shame in desiring more than you can accomplish. Striving leads to attaining, or it leads to frustration. When the latter happens, just know that you're better off than if you never reached.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Someone you know will be the subject of gossip. Whether or not there's any truth to the charges, you can make this situation better with your compassion and crying shoulder.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You are self-directed, independent and in the mood to do it your own way. Crashing up against your limits is unpleasant but necessary for growth.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). When you share joy with someone who totally gets you, that joy doubles. Don't feel bad if that person is hard to find. There are so many who are unreasonably threatened by the happiness of others.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Someone you love is in a gloomy place. The situation is not desperate, but it could go that way if left untreated. Your love and attention will go a long way.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You can no longer afford to hold on to the grievance. Too much is at stake. Let it go. What you'll gain in return is worth so much more: freedom, love, momentum.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The sweetest treasures of your life involve your connection with others. Therefore, anything you do to strengthen those bonds will go a long way.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Keeping up appearances can be exhausting, especially if you set the bar too high. What about being a lovable mess once in a while? Today is the perfect time to let your guard down.

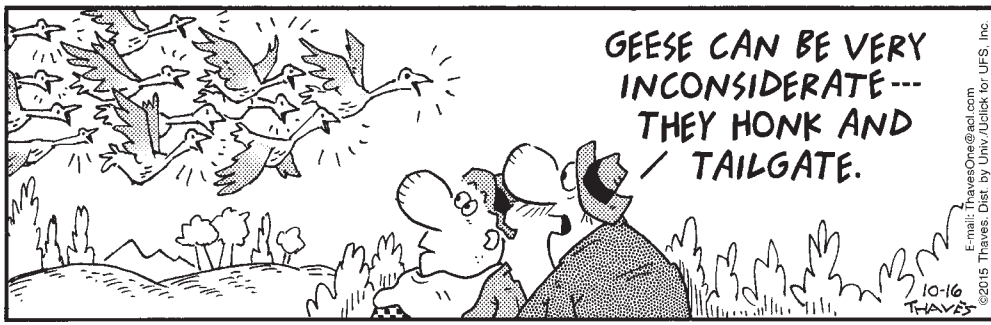
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). What you imagine will bring you happiness just might. This is your day to investigate. Start by asking the others who have it: "How happy are you?"

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Get intentional and aggressive. This is no day for a "que sera sera" attitude. "What will be, will be" won't do. "What will be" is what you decide to make happen.

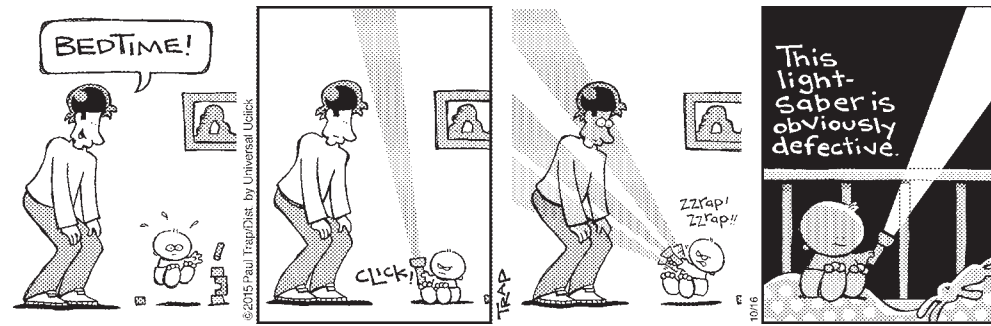
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Small talks have great benefits to our bodies, minds and souls, as they express the good will and acceptance we so need. We take care of one another by paying attention to what others have to say.

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Oct. 17). The next seven weeks will bring many new faces. Relax and be yourself. People will invest their time and attention first in who you are. After that, they'll invest in your project or whatever else you're selling. You'll go above and beyond the call of duty for your family in February. April and July are ideal vacation times. Virgo and Taurus people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 33, 25, 29, 3 and 17.

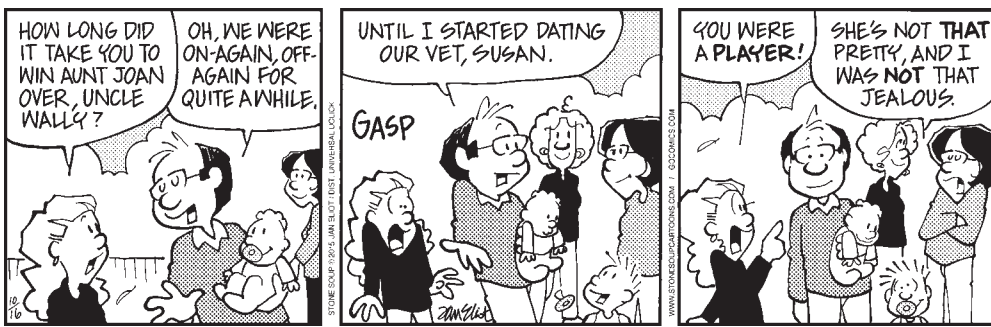
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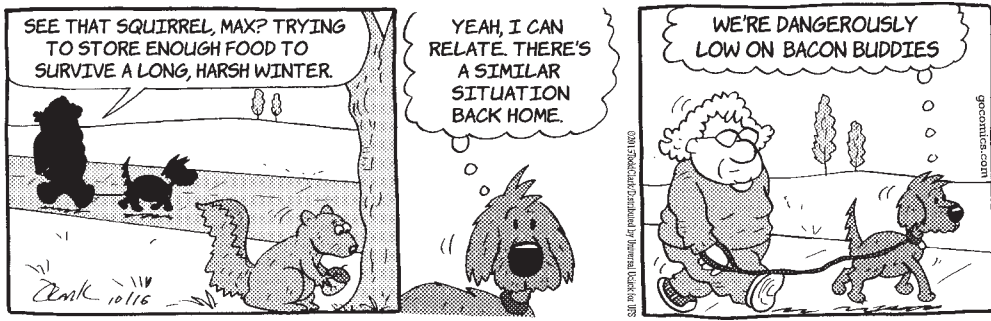
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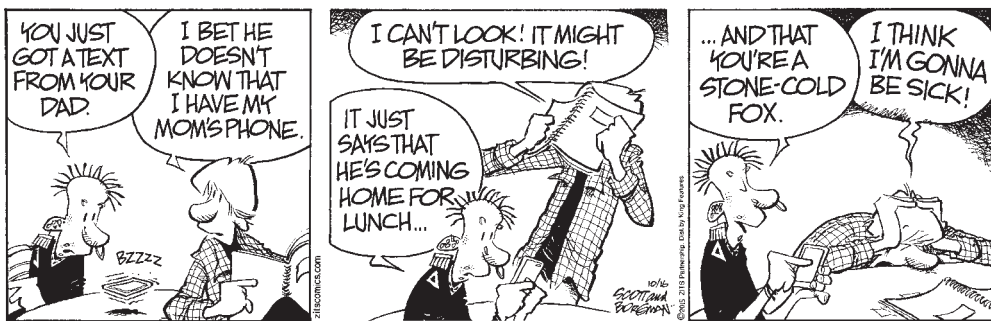
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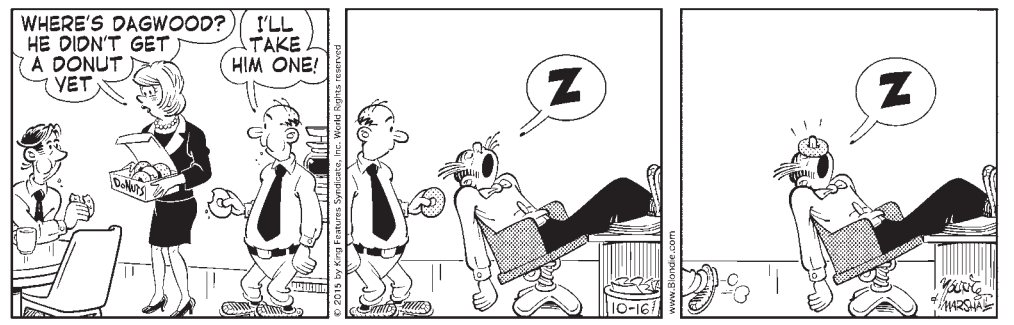
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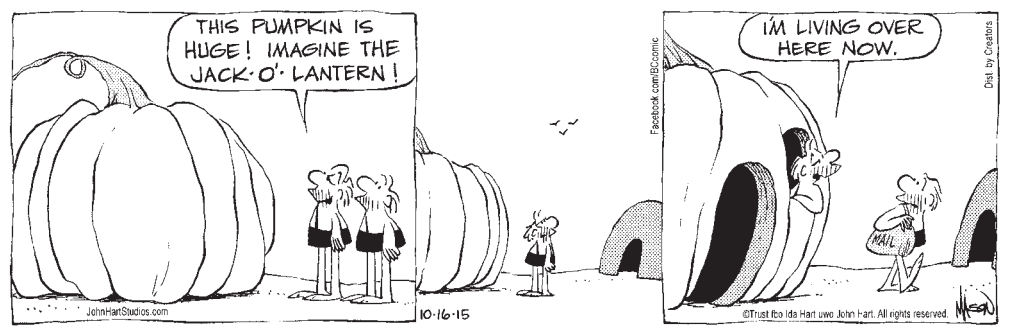
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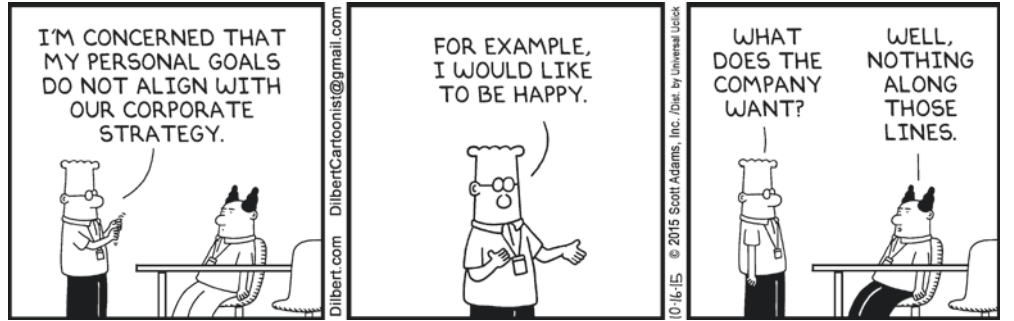
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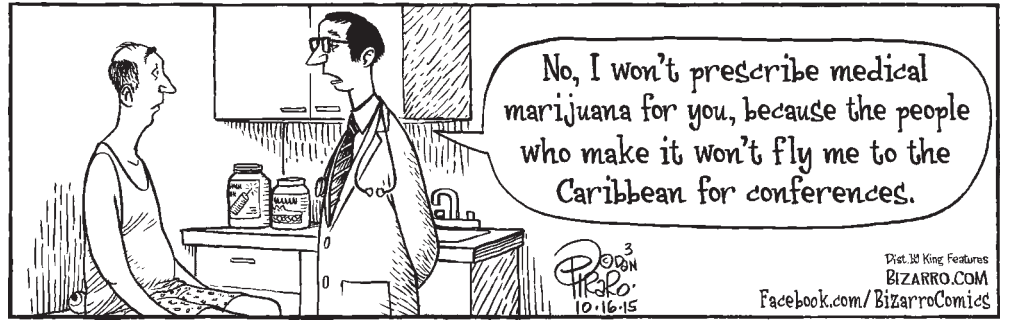
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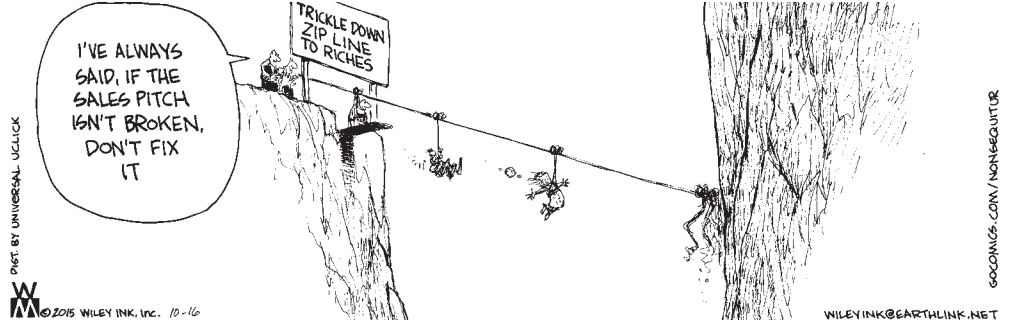
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