

Does mom have eating disorder?

Dear Annie: My mother has never been a big eater, but in the past year, she seems to have developed a serious eating disorder. At age 62, she skips meals regularly and has shrunk to a bony 90 pounds. Her skin is sagging, her hair is thinning, and she is very irritable.

Mom acts superior about her size and often criticizes other peoples' weight or eating habits. Oddly, she watches cooking shows all day, swaps recipes with me and cooks for everyone else. But she only eats her own "special" food. When I call it to her attention, she denies it and says she's simply watching what she eats.

I think it's ridiculous that a woman in her 60s is behaving like a teenage girl. I am her only daughter and apparently the only one in the family who realizes what a big deal this is. My dad and brothers think she's just a health freak.

I have cut back on my visits because I don't want my young daughters to be exposed to such a terrible female role model when they already struggle with their own body image issues. I'm also worried that there will be seri-

Annie's Mailbox

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Kathy Mitchell
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Marcy Sugar



ous health consequences if Mom doesn't start eating normally. What should I do? — *Worried and Annoyed*

Dear Worried: Please try to be less annoyed. Your mother sounds anorexic. While you are right that anorexia is more common in teenage girls, it can affect both men and women of any age. This is a mental health problem. Mom's self-worth is tied to how thin she is, and she doesn't recognize that she's in serious trouble.

Anorexia can cause heart problems and bone loss, kidney failure and even death. You cannot force Mom to seek help, but you can get information and suggestions on how to approach her by contacting the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders (anad.org) and the National Eating Disorders Asso-

ciation (nationaleatingdisorders.org).

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Frantic Mom," who desperately wanted help for her middle-aged son who is addicted to drugs and in need of psychiatric help. She said her late husband was a veteran and asked whether she was eligible for benefits.

You recommend several organizations, including the VA. Please tell her to also check with her local VA hospital and the Disabled American Veterans. Both of these organizations have highly trained service officers to help veterans and their families obtain the benefits to which they are entitled. If she has trouble, an officer from any local Veterans of Foreign Wars post should be able to connect her to the right people.

I hope this helps. — *Kathleen Blake, Past Erie County President, Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW*

Dear Kathleen Blake: We appreciate the additional suggestion and hope that "Frantic Mom" will look into all avenues of assistance. We would also like to take this opportunity to send our veterans our best wishes on this Veterans Day. Thank you so much for your service.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The wonderful thing about being assigned work you don't want to do is that your efforts to procrastinate will lead you to accomplish dozens of less-offensive tasks.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Your influence is significant, and yet it is also limited. All journeys come to a point at which there is nothing more to be done that will affect the outcome and you must gracefully surrender to the fates.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). While part of you asks, "What am I doing with my life?" the bigger part of you is living it moment by moment, responsibility by responsibility, day by day. Right now, that part of you can do without all of the pondering.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Freud suggested there are no jokes. An Italian proverb says, "He who jokes confesses." Listen to the humor today, as it will reveal the serious and secret heart.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You have power you're not using. You can get leverage if you angle yourself right. What you need is perspective. Detach and rise up for the bird's eye view. If you can't get there alone, reach out to someone on high.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The experts agree that happiness usually can't be caught in a chase or nabbed in a pursuit; rather it's the byproduct of a journey that has very little to do with personal gain.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). While learning choreography it's quite normal to go left when you're supposed to go right or bumble a step or two. But when you dance to your inner choreography, there are no mistakes.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You only have so much patience. One person requires more of it than the rest. You'll have enough if you dam up all the other drains and demands on your self-control.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). When you know your strengths you don't have to boast them. The one drawing a lot of attention to what he supposedly does best may indeed feel insecure on the subject. Your awareness and compassion are called for.

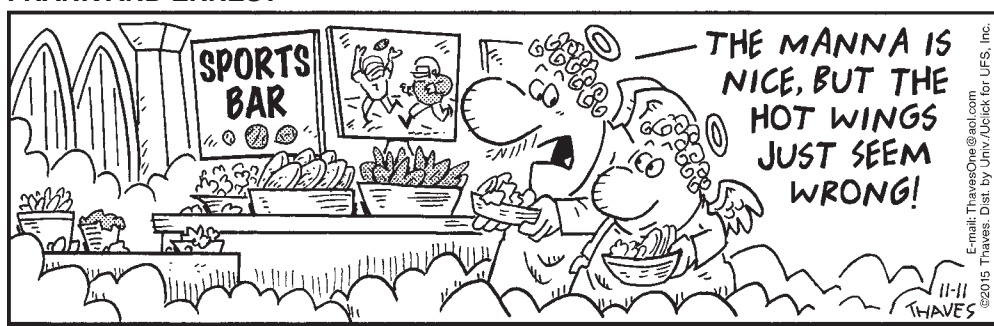
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). If you're looking, you can usually find someone doing the job better, faster, prettier and getting more money for it in the process. However, no one is doing exactly what you do. Hone your unique offerings.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The action itself isn't so different from yesterday's, but your approach is changing everything about how you experience this, and how effective you are at it, too.

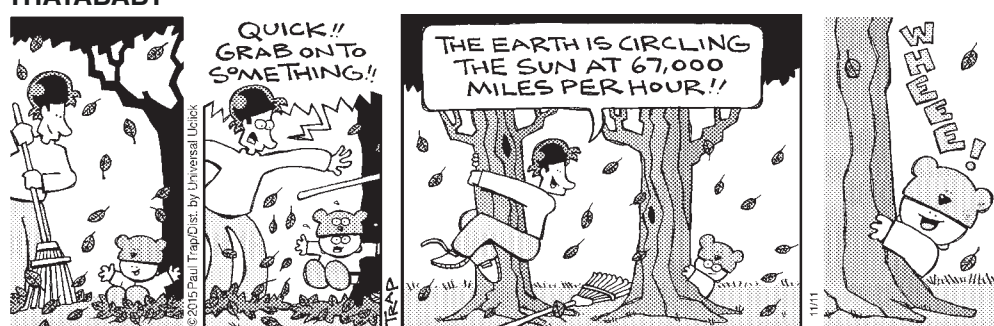
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Sometimes compartmentalizing feelings is like trying to catch weather in a jar. Puffy white clouds, lightning bolts and sunny blue skies exist as part of a system. They don't want to be contained.

THURSDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Nov. 12). You respect tradition but don't always follow it. This is your year for recognizing the need for creating personal rituals that speak specifically to your heart. Your relationships will be enhanced by your spiritual and creative explorations. March and May will be the most profitable. August brings a move. Sagittarius and Aries adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 30, 32, 1 and 19.

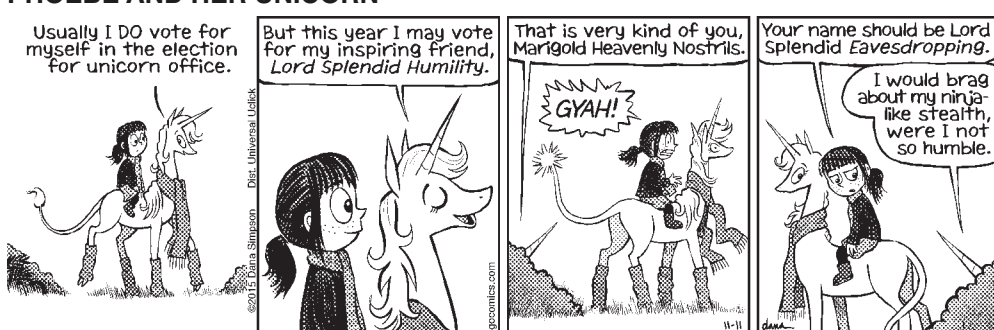
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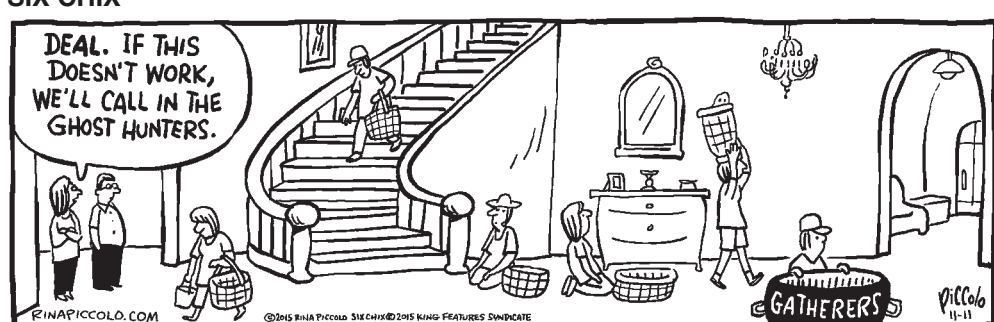
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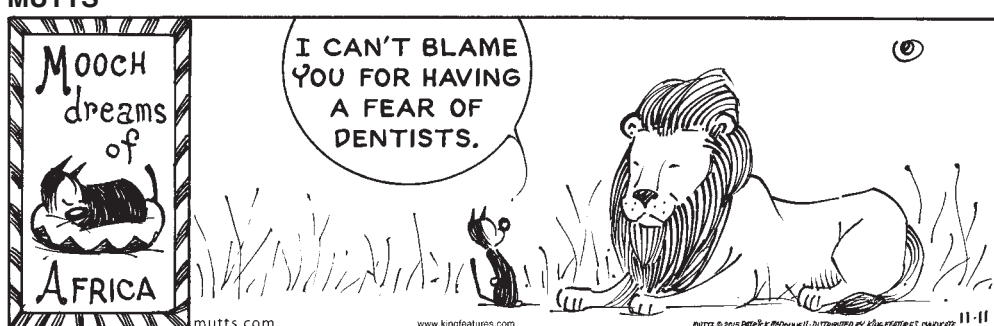
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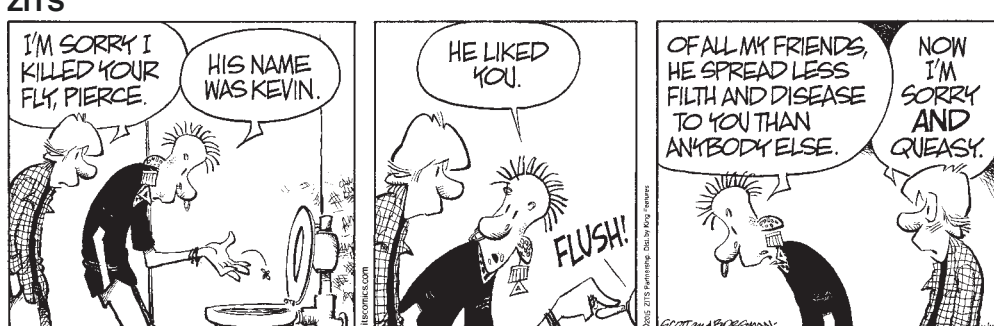
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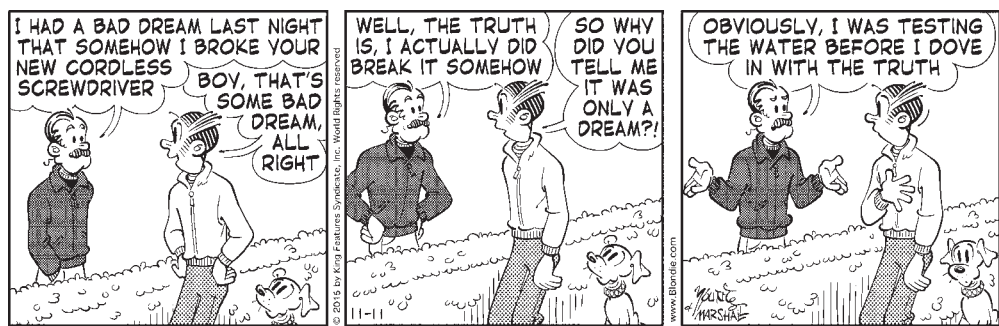
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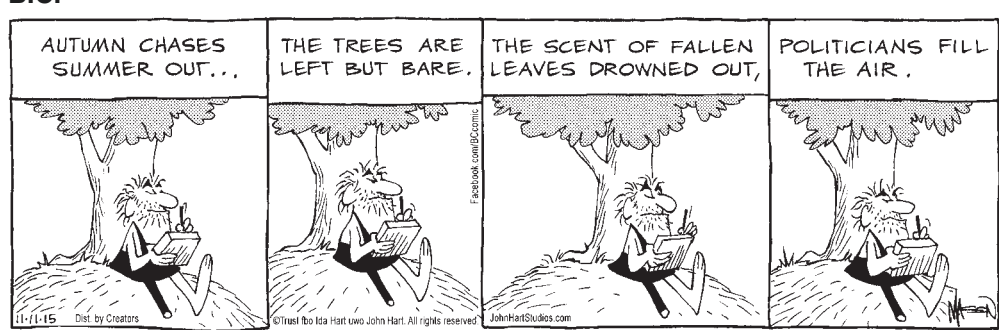
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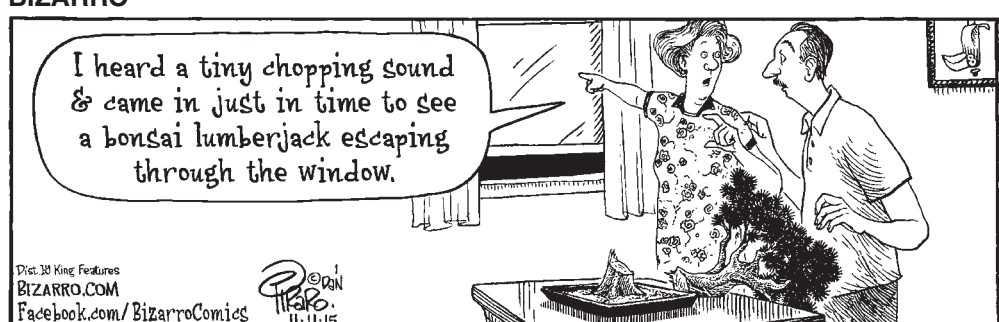
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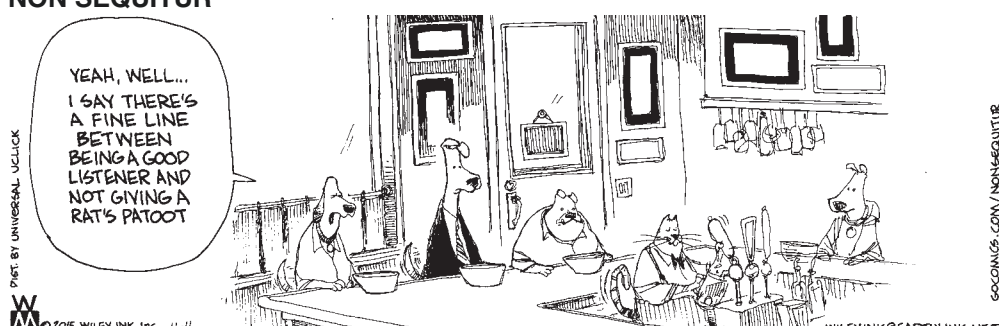
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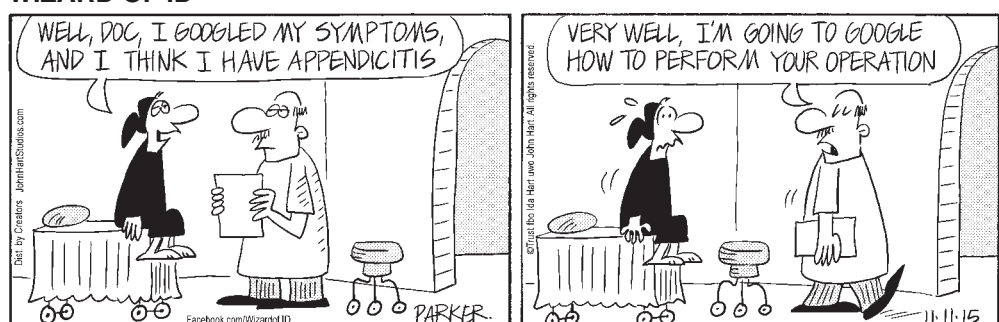
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