

# Son blames mom for abuse

**Dear Annie:** My son, "Robert," is 50 years old. He has no contact with his older sister or me. When Robert was 13, my husband and I divorced. His father was a troubled person. He was a typical old-fashioned European father who believed in physical punishment, and used a belt when disciplining his son. I tried to protect Robert, and this often caused a great many arguments with my husband.

After the divorce, the children lived with me. When Robert was in high school, he got into drugs and became too difficult for me to handle, so I sent him to live with his father, who lived close by. Robert continued to act out and was punished often, but he graduated with honors and was well-liked. He went on to college, married young and had two children. The oldest is autistic, which put a great deal of pressure on the marriage and they divorced.

I love my grandchildren. Robert used to bring them to visit every summer. We helped them financially. Robert cut his father out of his life, but still kept in touch with me. But in therapy, he became convinced that all of his problems are my fault and that his

## Annie's Mailbox

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and  
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sister didn't experience what he went through. Now he wants no contact with either of us. I write and text, but get no response.

Annie, I thought I was doing the best thing for him. I love my son. What can I do? — *Hurting Mother*

**Dear Mother:** It is not unusual for children to blame the parents when their lives go off the rails. Robert sees only that you left him with a father who may have been abusive. He doesn't see the reasons behind it or that you thought it was best at the time. And right now, he'd find any explanation from you to be self-serving.

We cannot guarantee that this can be fixed, but we suggest you leave Robert a voicemail or write a letter or email saying you are sorry for the decisions you made that had a negative impact on his life. Do

not make excuses or give explanations. Simply say you regret those choices and that you love him. You'd be surprised that a sincere apology can do. Meanwhile, if you are in contact with your ex-daughter-in-law, you might be able to maintain contact with the grandchildren through her.

**Dear Annie:** "Fed Up" said she is both tall and a size 14, so clothes are never long enough. She dislikes shopping online because she has to pay for delivery and returns.

Please tell her to check out sites like Amazon that often have clothes available with free shipping and returns. That way, if something doesn't fit, she won't have to pay to send it back. Some people order three different sizes — what they think will fit, one size down and one size up. Then she can try all of them on and return the ones she doesn't want without paying shipping costs. And it will give her a better idea about what will fit for her next order. — *John*

**Dear John:** There are many online retailers that offer free shipping and returns. While it may not be as quick as going into a store, it is the best option for people who have difficulty finding clothing in their size.

# Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** This is a lucky day for selling, earning and investing. Your attention has a way of making things bigger and better. Whatever you focus consistently on will grow right before your eyes.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** You're not the center of the solar system, but you may as well be as far as a certain someone is concerned. This person's thoughts will orbit nonstop around you today.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** What you want to do is possible. The only question is, are you willing to do what it takes to get there? Self-discipline is called for. So is an excellent action plan. How serious are you about this?

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** Sure, you'd prefer not to fight for what you want. But if everything were just handed to you, you wouldn't be half the person you are today. It's not about the war; it's about the warrior.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Loyalty is a rare trait. It can be hard to find a friend who will behave and say the same things behind your back as he or she would to your face. You'll test your friendships today, and one will pass with flying colors.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** You'll be drawn to those with interesting and exciting objectives and who have a tendency to put an upbeat spin on things. You need more friends like these!

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Once you find the answer to a question, two more questions will grow out of that answer. So don't expect resolution. Try to enjoy the mystery. There's something wonderful

about it.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** If they're not listening, maybe it's a good thing. It's a chance to work on your presentation and communication skills. Improving these will have a positive impact on every aspect of your life.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Your friends are lucky because you support and promote those you believe in at every opportunity. Make sure that you also take advantage of opportunities for your own advancement.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** You'll find a truthful source of information. Work all you can with this because it will give you a skill you didn't have before. Not only that, it will also make you wise.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** You tend to want to fix things for the people you love, but this could set a precedent that will be exhausting to keep up in the future. Stand back. Is it really your responsibility? Could they really help themselves?

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** The novel circumstances and people you're around today will bring out a different side of you. Even those who know you well will find that there's much to learn.

**FRIDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Nov. 20).** Your emotional intelligence is off the charts and your people skills will earn you fantastic experiences, friendships and romances. Next month feels like coming into your own. You'll take on a big, life-changing responsibility. January starts a physical makeover of either your home or your image. Virgo and Taurus adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 2, 19, 45, 28 and 11.

## FRANK AND ERNEST



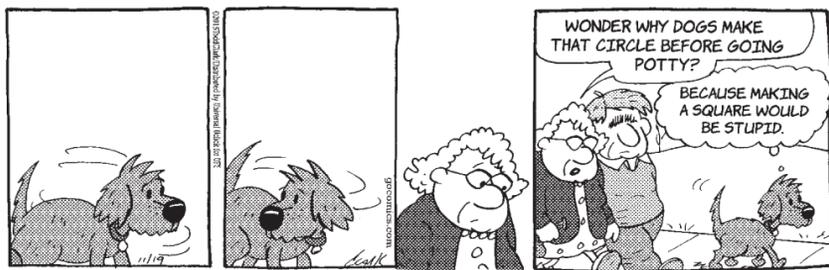
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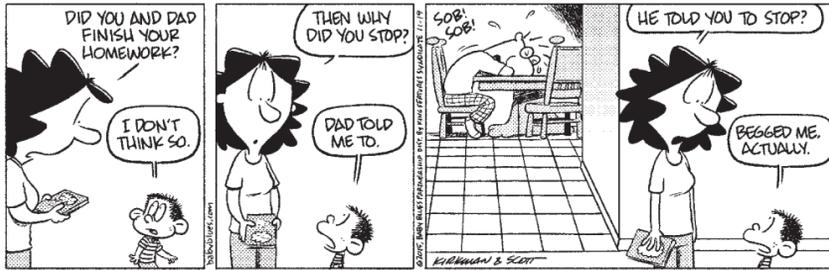
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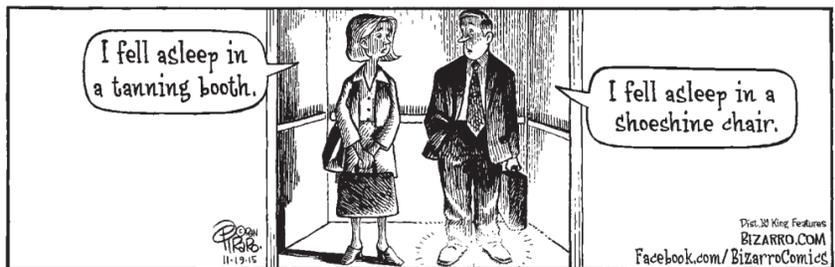
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