

Stepkids ruining relationship

Dear Annie: My boyfriend and I have been dating for 18 months and would like to move in together and eventually marry. It would be a second marriage for both of us. He has been divorced for four years and has three children who are just into their teens. I have no children, but have been actively involved in the lives of my many nieces and nephews, and the children of my friends.

His kids are the problem. I'm ready to give up the best relationship of my life because of them. They curse me, blatantly disrespect me, and are generally unpleasant to be around. They are physically and verbally violent toward each other, their peers and other family members. They lie and are disrespectful of adults and authority. They gossip and spread rumors.

I've told my boyfriend about their bad behavior, but they are well-mannered and courteous in his presence, so he claims not to see it. I've attempted a heart-to-heart with them, only to be mocked, have my words twisted and lies told about me. I am currently taking anti-anxiety medication over this situation.

How can I convince my boyfriend how his children really act? Should I bother? I was raised in a loving respectful home and feel totally out of

Annie's Mailbox

Creators
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Kathy Mitchell
and
Marcy Sugar



my element. — *Heartbroken in California*

Dear Heartbroken: Becoming a stepparent can be difficult and it doesn't help that your boyfriend closes his eyes to the problem. If his children are violent toward each other and other family members, he is undoubtedly aware of it, but unwilling to deal with it.

Teenagers can be notoriously rebellious, even under the best of circumstances. And their mother could be influencing them negatively, as well. You need to be extremely kind and patient, but the cursing, lying and disrespect must end. And that will happen only if your boyfriend insists on it. Please ask him about family counseling before the relationship disintegrates. Also, look into the National Stepfamily Resource Center (stepfamilies.info).

Dear Annie: It's taken a while,

but I want to respond to "Forever Trapped," who feels she was born the wrong gender, but worries about surgical solutions.

My son (he was born female, but is living his life as a male) was also confused. When younger, he exhibited so much male behavior that I thought he was a lesbian, but that wasn't it. He realized he was transgendered and transitioned from female to male many years ago. He had surgery, and you now cannot tell he was ever female.

My son is happily married, living as a gay man in the Boston area. There is nothing wrong with "Forever Trapped." Her gender identity didn't match her body. I hope she can find a therapist who works with the transgendered community. Surgery is expensive and not covered by insurance. Please don't give up. Be the person you were meant to be. — *Proud Parent of a Transgendered Son*

Dear Parent: We wish all parents would be as accepting and supportive as you. Thank you for writing.

Dear Readers: Sunday, Dec. 13, is The Compassionate Friends' Worldwide Candle Lighting in memory of all the children who have died. Please light a candle in the evening at 7 p.m., local time, and remember them with love. For more information, log on to compassionatefriends.org.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The ancient Greek tragedian Euripides said, "Slight not what's near by aiming for what's far." Today offers a stellar opportunity to get your needs met and it's right under your nose.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). First you have to believe you can do it. Half-hearted efforts are pointless. Either get into it more fully with a commitment or cut it free and open yourself up to other possibilities.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Strip away what you've been taught and you'll find that you've something unique to express. The reason you haven't expressed it yet is that it's so much a part of you that you don't even realize how original it really is.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Last night hit the cosmic "refresh" button while you were sleeping. It's like you woke up with a new brain this morning. Don't waste your new thoughts on your old worries.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Wanting to please the crowd could have an adverse affect on your creativity. What kind of presentation would you put on if your audience was only one person, and that one person was you?

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Some are adventurers by choice; others are adventurers out of necessity. You've been both kinds, which is what allows you to be fearless in today's scenario.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're not worried about the same things you used to worry about when you were small, but somehow you still feel as vulnerable as you did back then. Luckily, today brings support, friendship and love.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). There's not

one philosophy you dogmatically believe. You are a student of many trains of thought and you'll enjoy exploring new ones today. They don't have to be reasonable or feasible to be interesting to you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There is no magic fix. The answer isn't glamorous. There is no success secret — it's rather obvious what's needed. Hard work consistently in the same direction will get the job done.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It's not so easy to see where you fit in, but it's clear to see where you don't, so start with that. When you feel it's a bad fit, move on quickly. There's no time to waste.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Strong teams are diverse teams. You don't have to like or understand everyone — it's better if you don't. A team of you-clones can't accomplish anything beyond what you could accomplish alone.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Not content to keep the regular pace, you're ready to take a risk. Why creep along when you can fly? What would it take to launch you? You'll get there faster and you'll have a better view too.

WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 9). You'll do your best work this month and you'll be recognized in at least three different meaningful ways. Apply the bonus you receive in February to club dues or tuition. Your social horizons open up in April. There will be a new force for good in your family circle. Group vacations are featured in June. Aquarius and Taurus adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 3, 45, 21, 22 and 19.

FRANK AND ERNEST



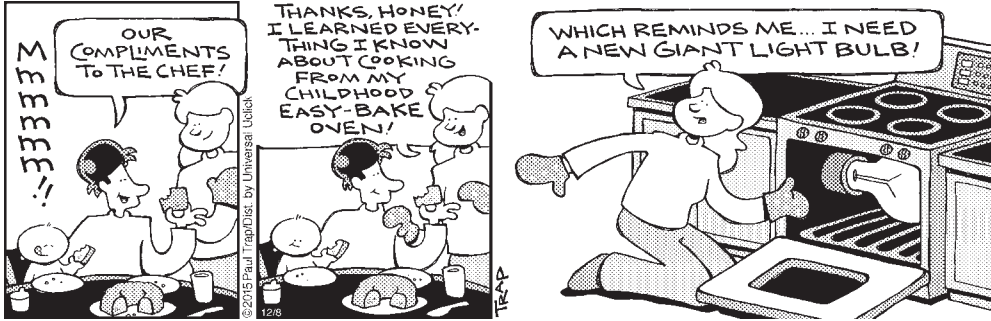
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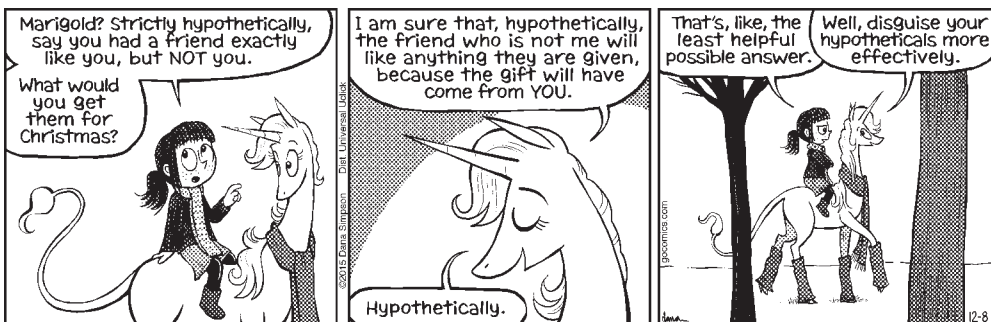
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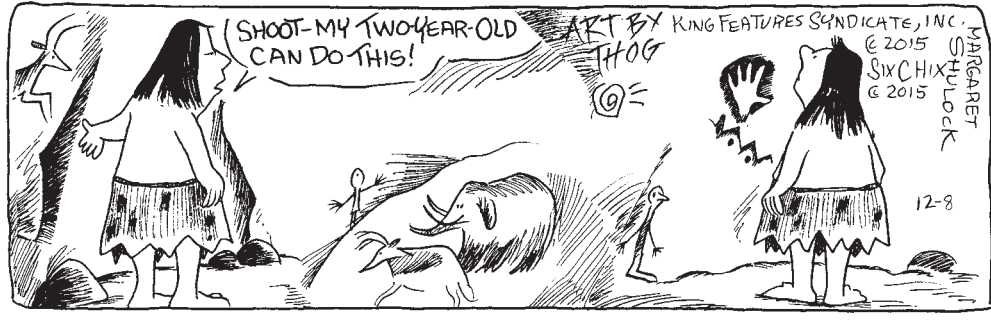
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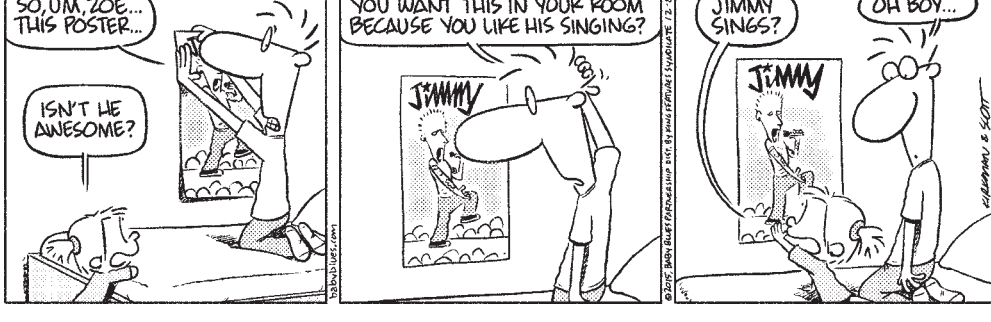
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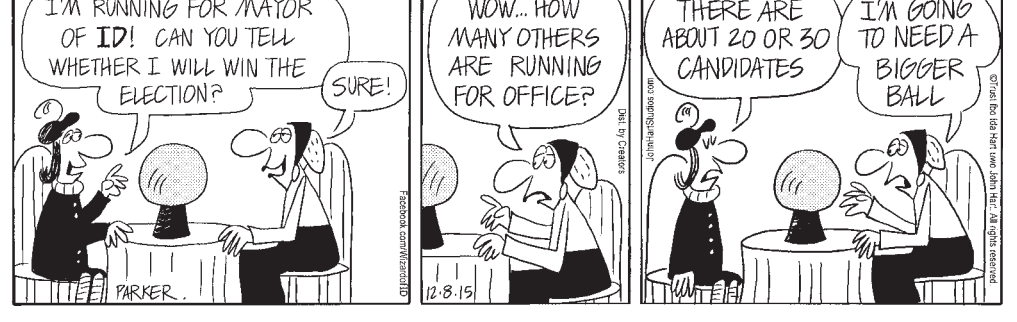
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BABY BLUES



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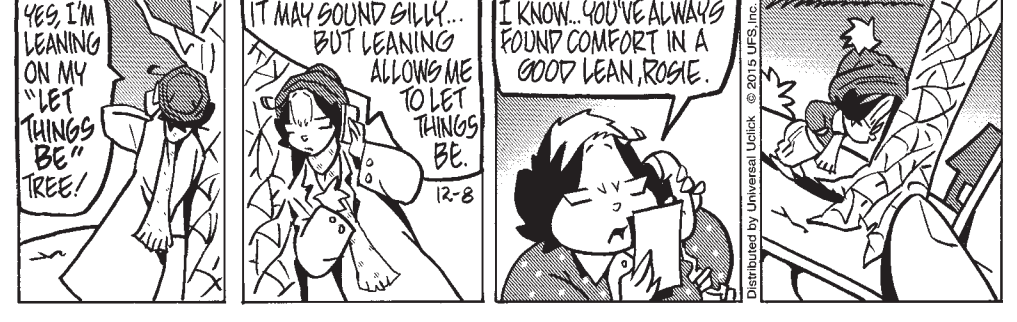
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