

Woman mad at uncaring sister

Dear Annie: I am one of six sisters. We are all adults with children of our own. One lives in New Jersey and the others live in Florida, three of us in the same city. My sister, "Claire," lives two hours away. Three years ago, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. With good doctors and care, she has successfully come through five surgeries and battled the rounds of chemo. So far, she remains cancer-free.

Four of us did whatever we could to help Claire during this time. Two of my sisters worked remotely so they could help with her medical appointments. Even my sister in New Jersey offered to stay with Claire. Only one sister, "Pam," never helped, and in fact, never even acknowledged the cancer or wished Claire a speedy recovery.

The problem now is that four of us are empty nesters and we vacation together once or twice a year. We have been doing this for more than a decade. But family isn't only for the good times. If a person cannot care about her sister when she is ill, then I don't think she should be included when we go on vacations. We always stay in timeshares, which I own. I don't invite Pam on these vacations, but

Annie's Mailbox

Creators Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



another sister does. I can't uninvite her without creating a rift.

Annie, I don't want to vacation with Pam, but feel the choice is out of my control. I would appreciate advice from a disinterested party. — *Sibling Dilemma*

Dear Sibling: Are you sure you want to do this? The consequences could turn out to be more distressing than worthwhile. An estrangement hurts you, too, and, as you said, will create a rift between all of the siblings. We know Pam deserves your condemnation for acting so uncaring toward her own sister, but have you asked her about it? Did you say, "Pam, I am so disappointed and angry that you cared so little about Claire that you couldn't even wish her well"? She needs to know how upset you are and why. She may have some explanation for her callous behavior,

and even though it will hardly be good enough, we hope you will hear her out and maybe even find it in your heart to forgive her. It's so much better than holding onto your anger.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Snowbird Driver," whose friends refuse to let her drive when they are going out for dinner. The one thing that was not mentioned was alcohol.

We have many friends who gather together for cocktails before leaving for dinner at a restaurant. With a cocktail or two before, and several drinks at the restaurant, they may well be driving under the influence by the time they are on their way home.

I live in Florida and see this situation often. If the neighbors do not drink themselves, they might feel terribly uncomfortable driving with anyone who has had a few. I agree with your answer about treating them with a gift card or dinner out in order to reciprocate. However, the real reason for their reluctance to share driving responsibilities might be too many cocktails imbibed by the driver. — *Sarasota*

Dear Sarasota: You could very well be right. Thanks for mentioning the possibility.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Decisions that appear to point to a permanent result actually do not. That's good news. Now you can just choose in a lighthearted, carefree manner. You can always change your mind later.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Resist the temptation to try hard to be liked. You're already liked. Encourage others to share, and then say very little. Confidence, real or pretend, is the secret to today's win.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The choices you make today are based on the education you got long ago. Realizing this will help you appreciate, understand and have compassion for the choices and history of another.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). From the small choices of diet or dress to the major life decisions, put yourself first. Yes, other people's needs matter. But you tend to forget that you're the only one who can live your life. Do it for you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). When you feel the impulse to share what you're going through, trust it and unload your feelings. The others need to hear this and will be processing what you've said through the night.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Maybe your problems are trivial. It would comfort you to think so, anyway. It's a good excuse to take in a sad drama about someone's extremely difficult life. Whatever you can do to put your worries in perspective will help.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Remember when you didn't think you could do it, but you tried anyway and ended up with a feeling of accomplishment and new skills to

boot? Well, that will happen all over again.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Life is so much easier when you act in the optimum moment, i.e., the very moment the impulse rises up in you. It's not true for every day, but today your timing is stellar!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Your popularity rush has started (thanks to Venus) and you're already starting to give the world another side of you. They see you as courageous, even though you're just doing what comes naturally.

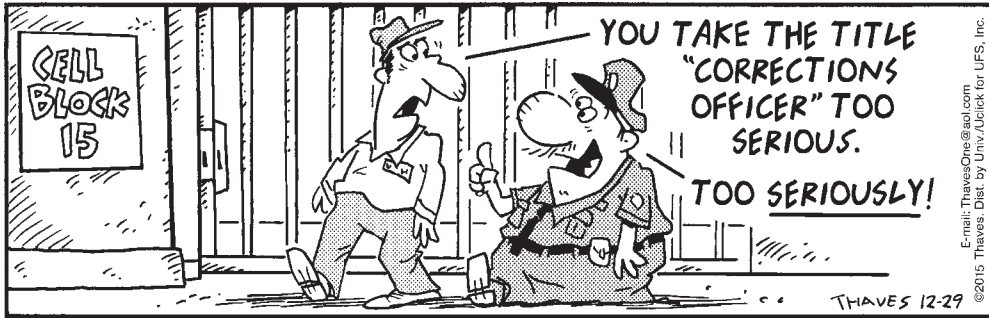
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The vagaries become clear as you ask more questions and track the answers. Even more revealing will be the answers that are not forthcoming. Pay attention to the gaps.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Should you blend or should you pop? Neither will win you the chance to participate. Instead of thinking in terms of blending in or standing out, think in terms of fitting and you'll do just fine.

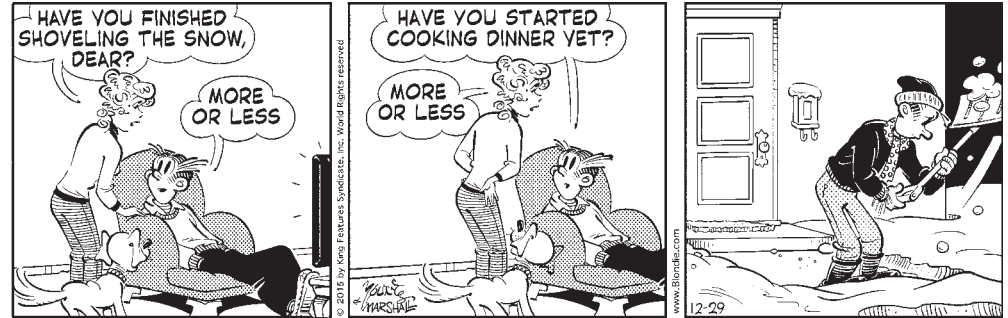
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). With all of your grand plans, there's no time or energy to waste in harboring resentment. The easiest way will be to cut your losses, but if you can't take it that far, go in for a short, sweet negotiation.

WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 30). It's a year for trying things a new way. The next six weeks will bring financial opportunity, sweat and a bag of money. In March you'll benefit from getting out of the driver's seat of a relationship to let the other person take the wheel. A flurry of social activity will culminate in a summer project destined for greatness. Pisces and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 17, 2, 19 and 36.

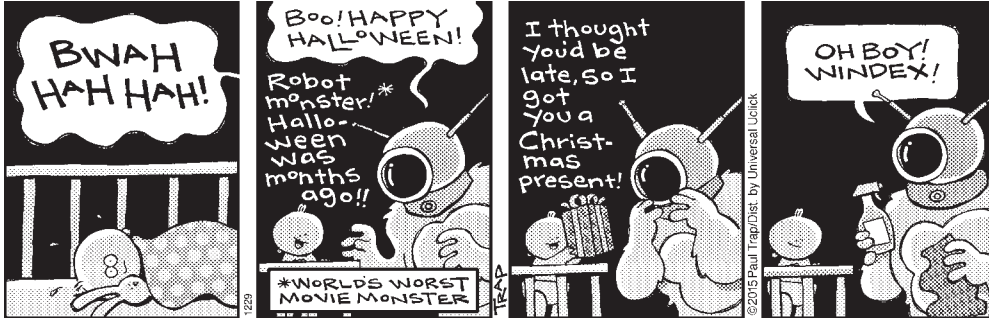
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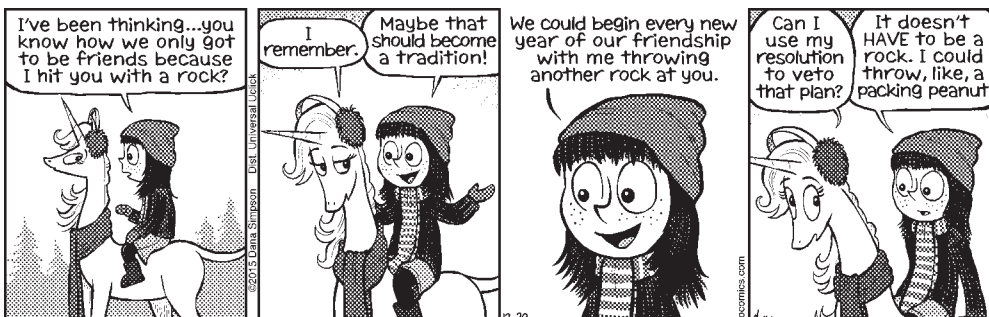
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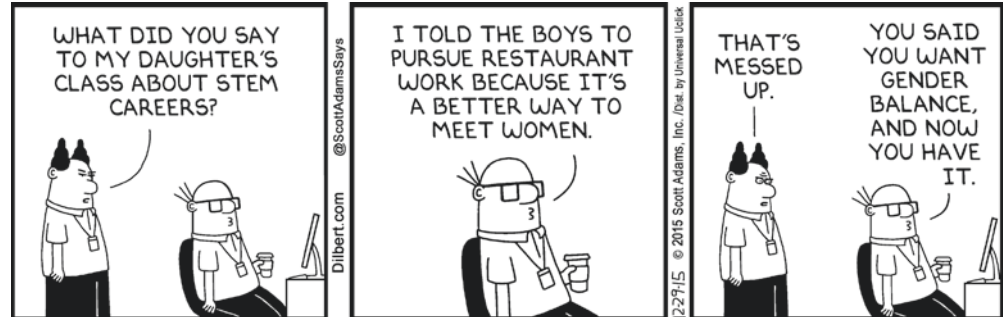
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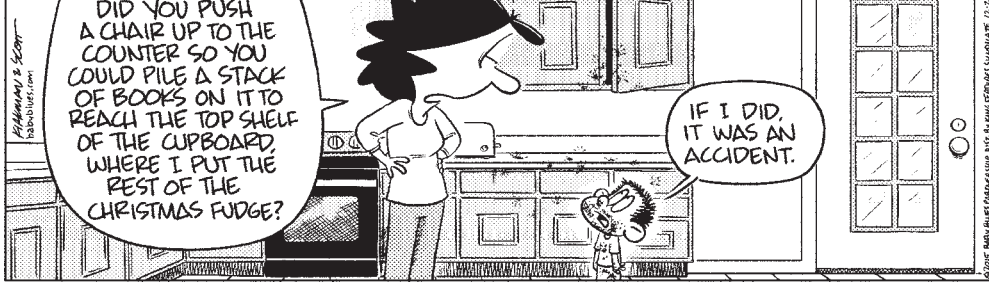
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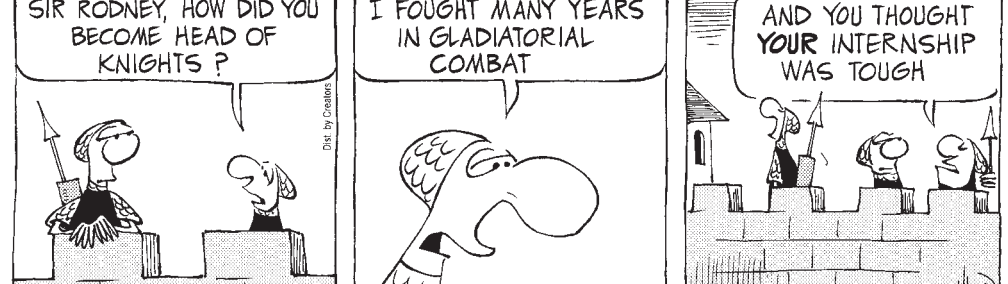
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