

Wife withholding intimacy

Dear Annie: I'm 48 and have been married to my beautiful wife for 21 years. Lately, whenever we argue, she will withhold sex. This could be anywhere from a week to three months. And she won't talk about it.

This is putting a huge strain on our relationship. We've been to counseling for a year, but it hasn't helped. She tells me that men my age don't really need sex and that my libido is too high. Every fight we have brings back arguments from 10 or 15 years ago. It's like she cannot forgive and move on.

Women wonder why men stray. I don't want to leave her, but I've had enough. How can I explain this to her? Every time I bring it up, she shuts me down. — *Cut Off in Montreal*

Dear Montreal: Your wife is wrong about your libido, although it's possible that she has libido problems of her own. But that is only part of what's happening. No matter what you may have done 10 or 15 years ago, bringing up old arguments and shutting down any discussion of current issues damages your marriage. Counseling cannot possibly work if your wife refuses to participate honestly. You can ask for a trial separa-

Annie's Mailbox

Creators Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



tion to see if that wakes her up. In the meantime, ask to see your counselor on your own.

Dear Annie: I wrote to you a couple of years ago, signing my letter, "Unhappy Parents." I said that my husband and I felt my stepson was making a big mistake by marrying much too young and we said so. Instead, my stepson repeated these hurtful words to his fiancée and from that point forward, they would not speak to us. We were not allowed to attend the wedding.

My husband was an amazing father, and we were all very close until this woman wedged herself in and started saying bad things about us. Apparently, she is extremely close to my husband's ex-wife and that woman hates my husband.

You told us to try writing them

a letter and apologizing, even though there was no guarantee it would succeed. We immediately did this, but it didn't help much. They have since had my husband's first grandchild. We sent baby gifts, but have not been asked to see the baby. They instead sent us a book of pictures of the baby, including several with the ex-wife holding the child. It's a beautiful book, with quotes about the importance of family, yet there is not one photo of my husband in it.

I am so hurt. They have now alienated my husband's daughter, which in hindsight was likely a relationship only held together for financial reasons. Annie, I helped care for these kids for 22 years. Should I give up? Is there anything else I can try? — *Still Unhappy*

Dear Still: If the ex-wife is poisoning the relationship and the daughter-in-law still holds a grudge, there isn't much you can do. However, they did send photos of the baby, which is more than you might have received before. Your husband should let his children know that he will always love them, but otherwise, we urge you to focus your energies elsewhere. We're so sorry.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Resist the urge to impress strangers. Who knows if you'll ever see those people again? You'll never regret spending the best of your energy making a stellar impression on those closest to you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Nature is efficient. You were made with the sensors to tell you exactly what not to do. Pain equals "stop right now." Trust the equation and be very skeptical of anyone who tries to convince you otherwise.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You'll be making a presentation. While it will be important to come off as relevant to the times, your humanity is what will shine through. Warmth and softness will trump the clean, shiny cold of the cutting edge.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Because your senses are ready to take it all in, the day will be peppered with big feelings, inconsequential inventions, nuanced moods, surprises and excitements. What more could you want?

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). When you look objectively at your life, how much of it can you trace back to a dream of the way you wanted it to be? It's something to think about as you construct today's brand new dreams.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Those around you should know better by now than to question your seemingly idiosyncratic ways. There is always a method to your madness, and if you had to stop and explain at every juncture, you wouldn't get half as much done.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You have the sneaking suspicion that you can do better, and you'll devote your energy to improving.

You would rather be around the people who compel your strength than the people who agree to your status quo.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Considering how your imagination is running today, it will be important that you make an extra effort to see people the way they are and not the way you wish (or long) for them to be.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You have a decision to make. Take a risk and you'll set a plot in motion. If you don't take the risk, the plot will continue in the pattern that has already been established.

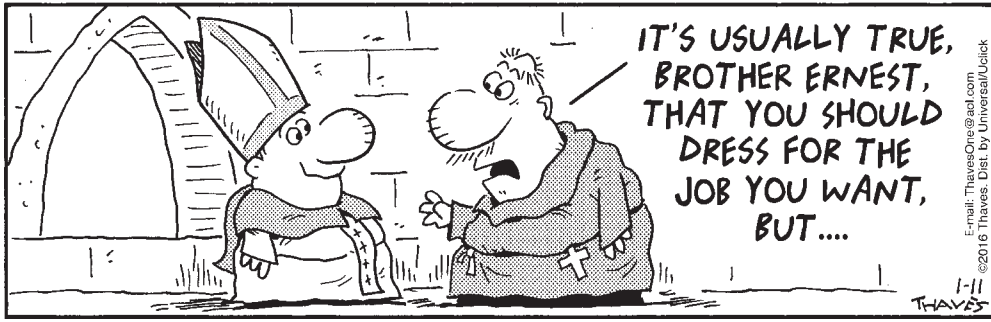
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Something that has become very personal to you will become meaningful to others, too, if you share in the right way. Your plight is more universal than you know.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). They'll want to know your experience, but somehow it can't be told in a few words. You don't want the feeling to be reduced by over-simplification. Maybe this is best kept in your heart.

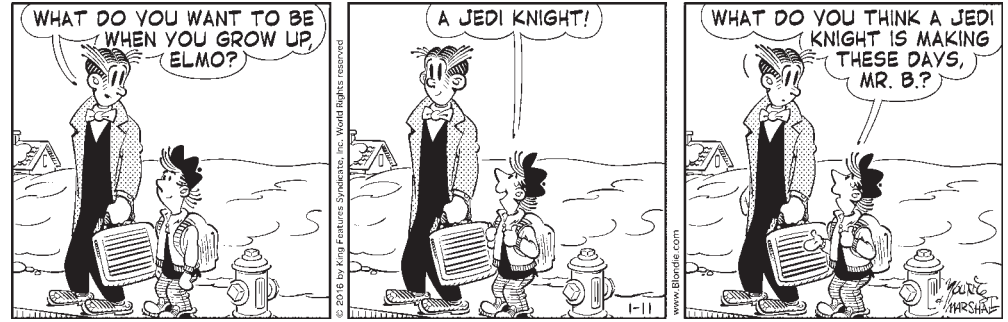
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). So, you weren't expecting much? That was smart. You set yourself up for a pleasant surprise. You're going to appreciate what the others bring to the table today.

TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 12). People tend to associate warm, fuzzy, wonderful feelings with falling in love, but the actual experience is often far less cozy. The nature of "falling" is anticipation and fear. You make all of this work for you this year as you tumble for people, places and situations. Truly, this year will be an adventure. Taurus and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 19, 33, 38 and 5.

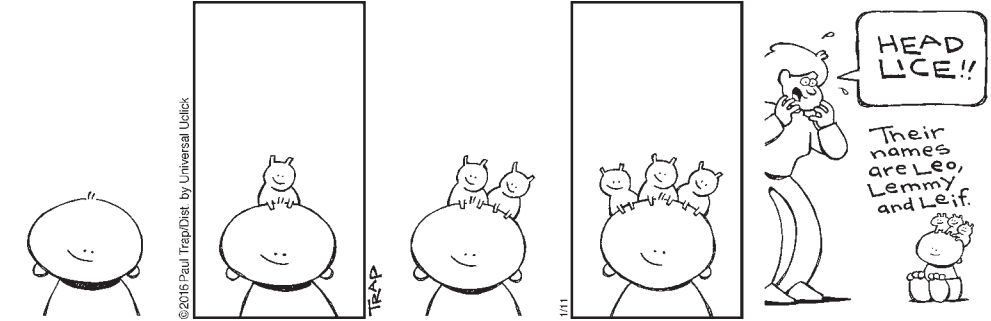
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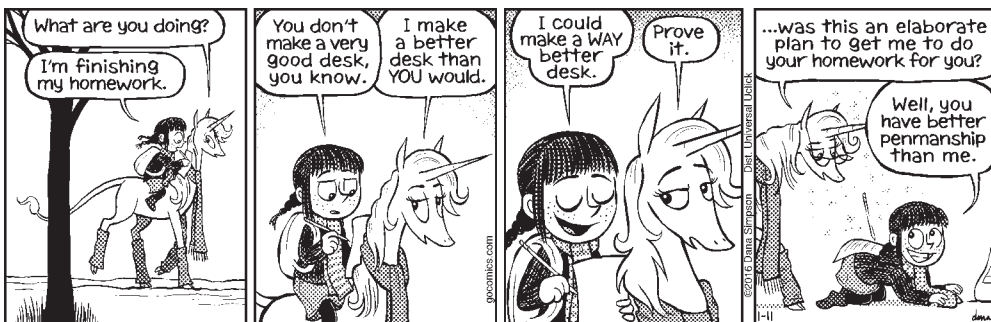
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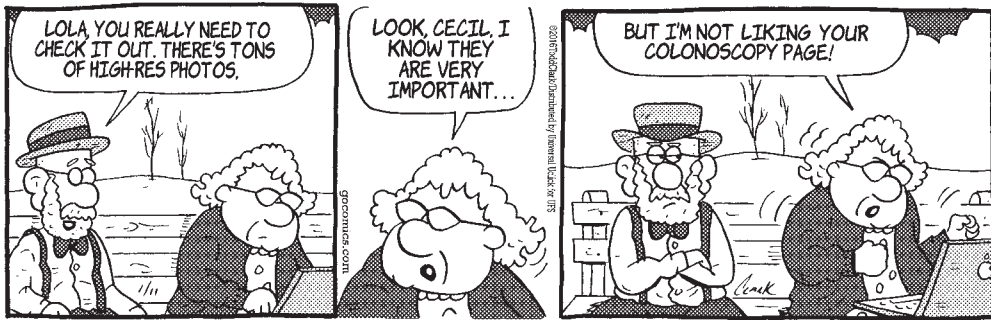
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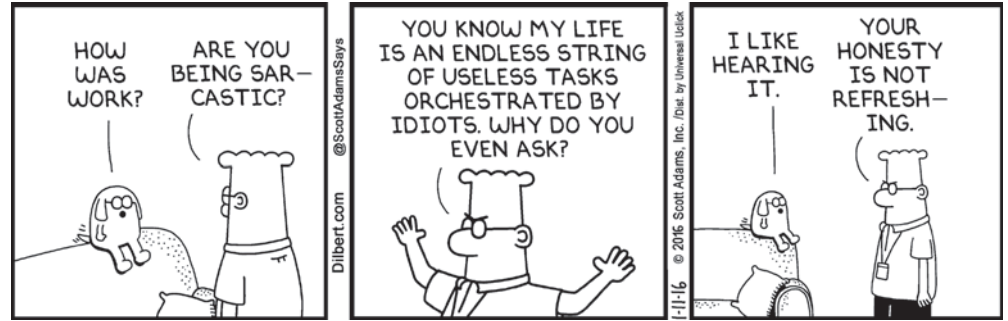
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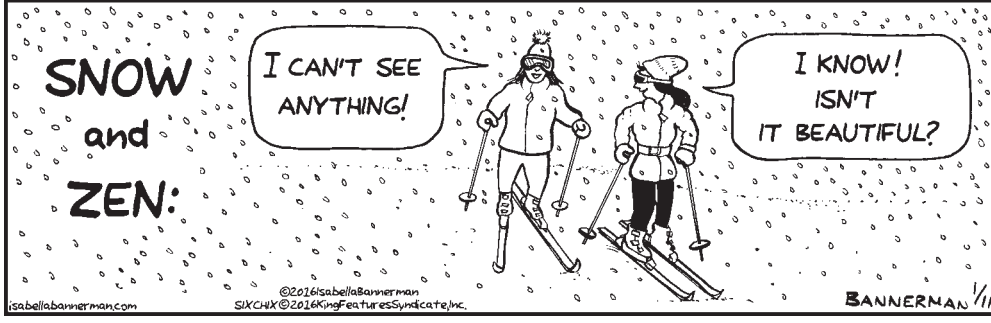
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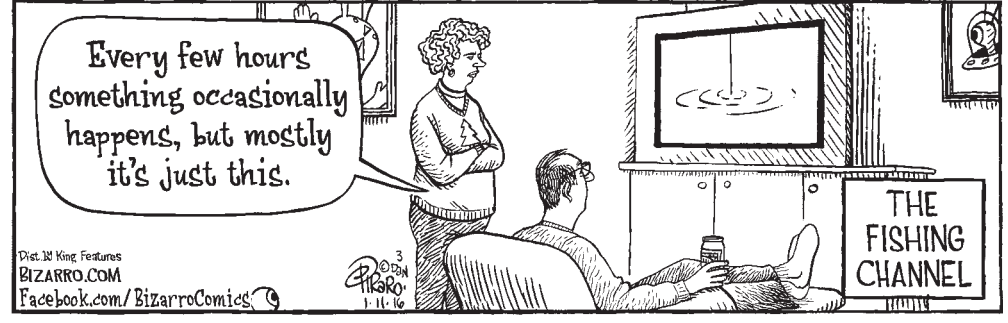
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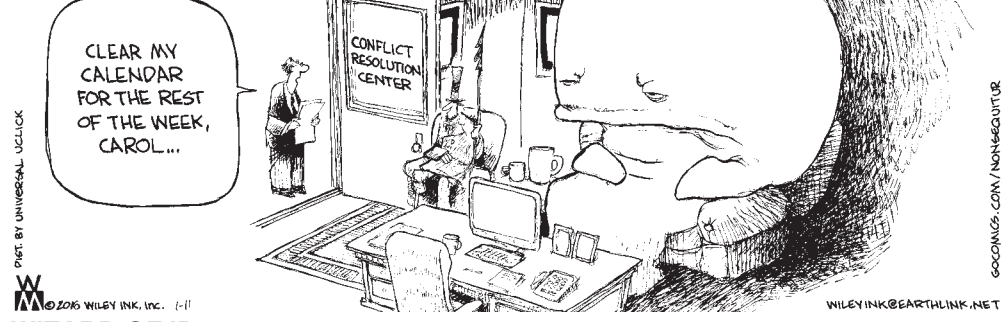
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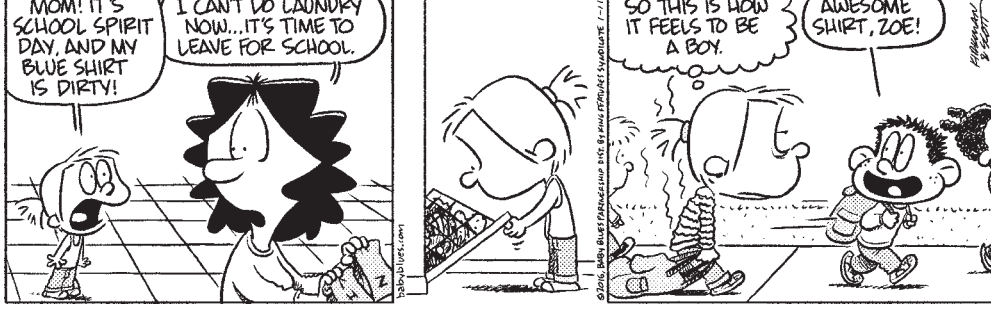
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