

Adult tired of protective parents

Dear Annie: I have epilepsy with very minor seizures that occur roughly once every three weeks. Because I am currently unemployed, I am forced to live at home with my parents as I search for another job.

Even though I am over 30, my mother wants me to stay at home unless I have a job interview or one of my parents is with me. She insists someone else drive me wherever I go. She is even fearful of me walking to appointments two blocks from the house.

A sad irony is that my mother has a Ph.D. in sociology and doesn't hear me when I tell her that the social isolation that she insists on imposing makes me depressed. This is still the case even after I pointed out her highlighting that very issue in her own sociology textbooks. I have attempted to get my father to intervene, but he wants Mom to control the show.

I've tried to quietly put up with the idea of "Mom's house — Mom's rules." But I don't know how much longer I can stand it. Do you have any suggestions for dealing with the enormous stress I'm under because of her need to control my life? — *A Frustrated*

Annie's Mailbox

Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell
and
Marcy Sugar



South Dakotan

Dear Frustrated: Your mother is being overprotective, but it comes from her fear that you will have a seizure and no one will be around to assist you. Her advanced degree is irrelevant because she is not thinking clinically. This is personal. She especially worries that something will happen when you are driving or walking alone. She knows it curtails your social life and could increase the odds of depression, but she considers those concerns to be less important than your safety.

Your best bet for finding assistance and support is through the Epilepsy Foundation (epilepsy.com). Aside from chat rooms and other social networking to help alleviate your isolation, the site may provide

ways to reassure your mother and get her to lift the chains. We hope you find a job soon.

Dear Annie: For several years, I have been giving identical amounts of money to my family on Thanksgiving so that they could spend it on Black Friday to purchase their own Christmas gifts. I have 19 people to buy for. These same family members were asked to bring their purchases to me for wrapping so that they could open them on Christmas.

Last year, I asked instead that they wrap their own gifts and bring them to our annual Christmas Eve party. It worked out great! Obviously, there were no returns or exchanges, and for a change, I got a kick out of seeing them open their presents instead of knowing what the gifts were ahead of time. This is easier on everybody. (It also allowed my teenagers to see that money only goes so far because they knew what amount I had given each person.)

I have learned to enjoy the holidays again. — *L.*

Dear L.: You are both generous and smart enough to find enjoyment where you can.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) You know your weaknesses and limitations, and you deal with them head on. This is why you keep improving. Someone notices. You could even be promoted for this.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) Stellar results often come from positivity, optimism and mental steadiness. But they can also come from calamity, disaster and darkness. The key is not to discount any of your moods. Move through them instead.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) Is it heartening to know that you are someone's sun? With your position at the center of the system comes the responsibility of staying vibrant and not disappearing for any long amount of time.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) Some things are only true because you believe them. Then there are things that are true regardless of whether you believe, interact with or acknowledge them at all. Luck comes from investing in that second category.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Providence speaks to you through seemingly arbitrary outcomes. You'll interpret the message better when you believe it was meant for you; then assign light-hearted associations.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Lateral moves don't excite you. You crave improvement. Change takes energy, and you don't want to misplace your energy by putting it into something that will make a difference that's not an improvement.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) When you decide to, for instance, leave the house at one time instead of another time, you are not thinking about changing history. And yet all will be altered. Still, you make your choice with conviction. That's confidence.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21) You've mastered the fine art of appearing to be carefree and confident while inwardly chasing down exactly what you want. Certain people around you feel how serious you are and will be duly impressed.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) It would be foolish to brush your shortcomings aside as if they didn't exist. When you claim them instead, you'll find the up side of the flaw. Bonus: others will understand you better and make your life easier, too.

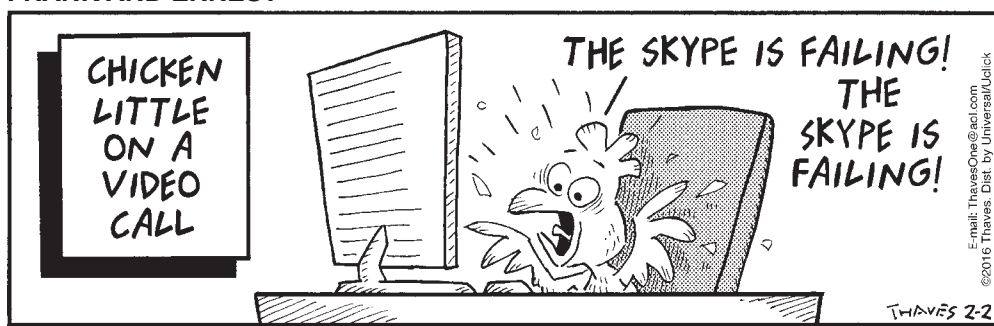
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Conventional types warn against "losing yourself," but once you're into something, you get so intensely focused that you can't help but become the project. Your immersive approach is what makes you great! Don't change.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) You would like to be known and acknowledged for your meaningful achievements, not for the meal you're about to eat. Do your choices regarding social media reflect this? Either way, you'll gather fans today.

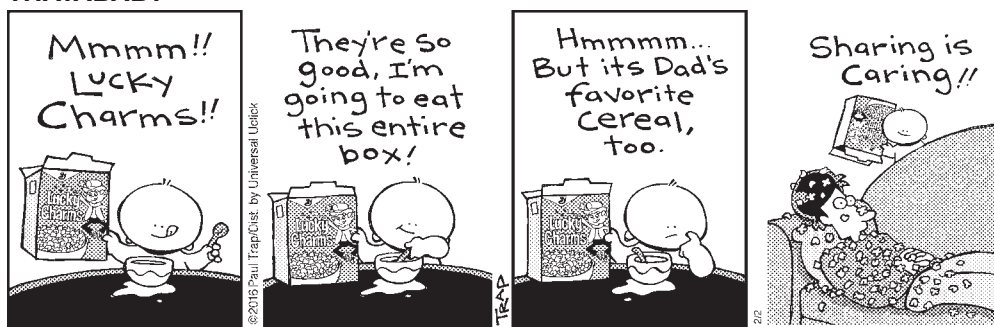
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) A rush of shy energy is actually an invitation addressed to whatever part of you feels smaller than the situation. The invitation reads, "You belong! Welcome! You're as much a part of this as anyone else here!"

WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 3) The very nature of adventure is that it's unpredictable. The more you try to plot out your year, the better your year rebels against you, promising you fun and excitement! So ditch the plans, hitch your wagon to the wild card and hold on for dear life. The ride goes until April, when you'll regroup and make new goals. Gemini and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 49, 31, 10 and 28.

FRANK AND ERNEST



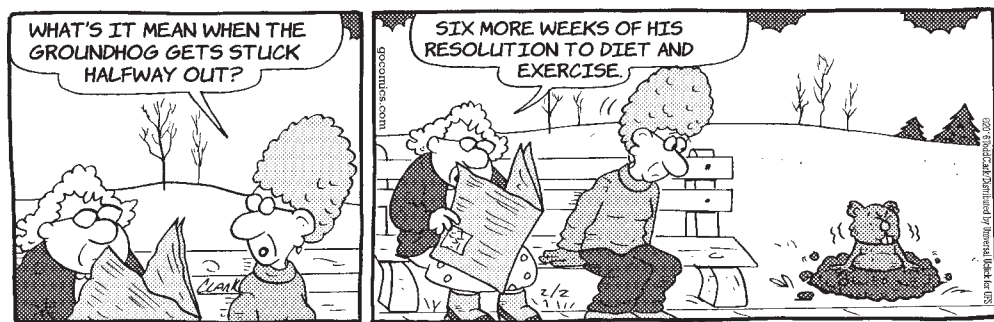
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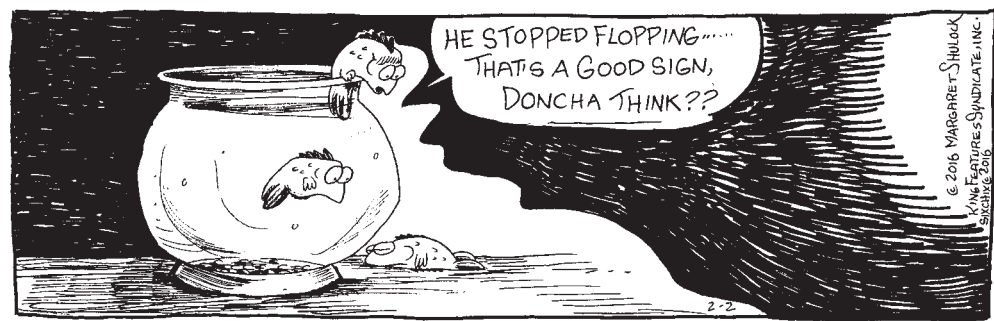
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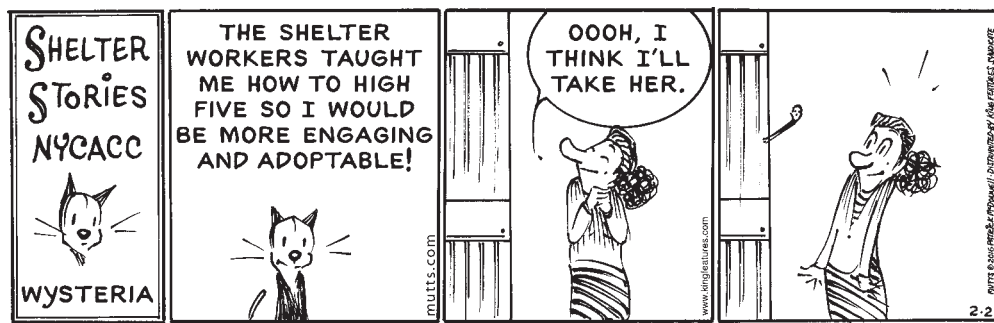
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