

Childless friend feels left out

Dear Annie: I live in the same town as two friends from high school. One of these friends married right out of high school and starting having children. My other friend and I both went to college together, and then she also married and started her family. Neither of these women had a career outside the home. I, however, worked in a professional capacity until retirement, and I did not have children.

We are now in our 60s. I love both these ladies and am glad we live in the same town. Here's the problem: When I am with either friend individually, they will talk about a variety of topics with me, which I enjoy. However, when we get together as a threesome, these two mostly talk to each other about their children and grandchildren and I am left out of the conversation. Changing the subject doesn't work, and I don't enjoy feeling like the third wheel.

Any suggestions on how to deal with this touchy matter would be appreciated. — *Left Out*

Dear Left Out: You've

Annie's Mailbox

Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell
and
Marcy Sugar



known these women for decades. It's OK to be frank, as long as it is done in a light-hearted way. The next time you get together, say with a smile, "Laurie and Louise, you have five minutes to discuss your kids. I'm happy to know what's going on with your families, and I'll even look at the latest pictures of the grandchildren. But more than that leaves me out of the conversation. We have so many other things to talk about. OK?"

Dear Annie: This is in reply to the letter from "Nervous Nellie," whose fiance never stops looking at other women.

Twenty five years ago, I was in the same situation. After seeing my fiance make eye contact with and smile at other women numerous times,

I had enough. Up until then, I had never said a word about it, knowing that he would turn it around and tell me I was insecure.

One day we were in a large supermarket aisle, when, as I turned to speak to him, I saw that he was ogling a woman in the checkout line. And she was returning his smile. I went up close to him and whispered in his ear, "If you EVER do that again, I will yell as loudly as I can that you are impotent and unemployed, and that she can have you if she wants. (Part of that was true.) He knew by the fire in my eyes that I meant it and the disrespectful behavior ceased immediately.

Nonetheless, within months I decided that I didn't need this loser and broke our engagement. But that incident is still a sweet memory. — *Empowered Myself*

Dear Empowered: We love it. Especially the part where you broke off the engagement. If this man required a major warning in order to treat you with respect, he wasn't worth your time and you figured it out before you married him. Good for you.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Everyone needs attention. There are those around you who seem to need it more than others and for some strange reason that makes you less likely to give it to them. It's human nature. You'll use the principle to your advantage.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The conversation you really need to have is between you and you. The topic is, after all, a secret no one else really needs to know right now. You're entitled to your private world. They may want in, but you don't owe that to anyone.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The thing that makes a bell a bell is its sound. The thing that makes a pen a pen is that it can write. As for you, you are a far more complex being and there is not one thing that you need to do to be who you are.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're friendly, which will serve you well now since you don't know the ones you need to know to get the job done. When in doubt, introduce yourself. The one who can help you best is close at hand.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Maybe you didn't mean to, but you tipped your cards, showing the fondness you feel for another through good-natured teasing or lighthearted banter. There's a unique bubble of fun around the two of you now.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). If you want to laugh hard (and possibly clean up a horrible mess later) just assume that the rest of the world has the same ideas as you do about what's appropriate to the situation at hand.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Stand your ground. You can afford to be cheeky at this point. Plus, you'll be endowed with the trust of the group for being strong in who you are.

Of course, you're basically interested in impressing that one certain person.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You can lay all the groundwork perfectly and set yourself up with a fully functioning track to happiness. But still there are no guarantees. Doing the work isn't enough. You also must take a risk, climb on board and ride the ride.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). While seeking the very best that's out there, you may just find there is nothing but the best to choose from. Much depends on the fit and how well you know the particulars of what you need.

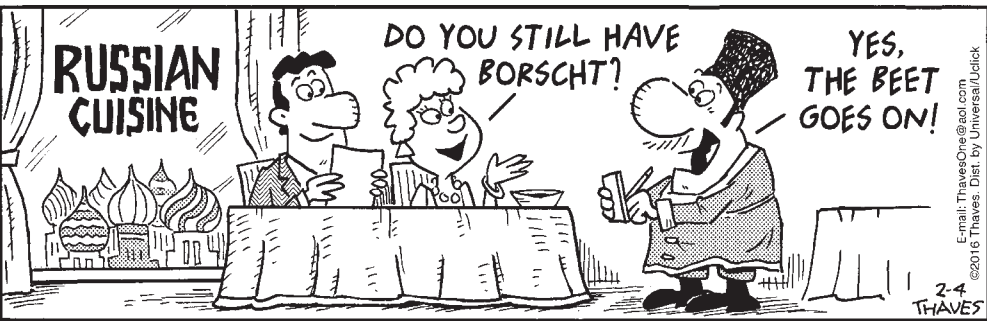
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The idea that begins in brilliance will end there, too, as long as you know to get out when the brilliance is still happening. You have several weeks to work this through.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your issue will become a non-issue in a matter of moments. You have the answers and know how to apply them, so all you have to do is methodically walk yourself through this.

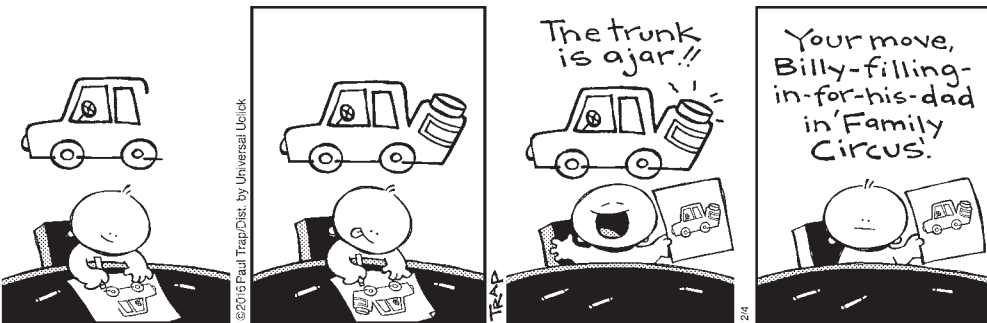
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You need more support. The person who is busy patting himself on the back isn't going to have a hand free to applaud your achievement. You'll get it when you actively seek friendship with modest and attentive people.

FRIDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 5). You'll put yourself in a better position, and then start seeing things clearly. A friend comes along to help with this. The next four weeks will bring many exercises in perspective. A single decision will lead to a completely new you by April. May brings money, applause and emotional support. July puts a vendetta to rest. Cancer and Libra adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 39, 33, 1 and 40.

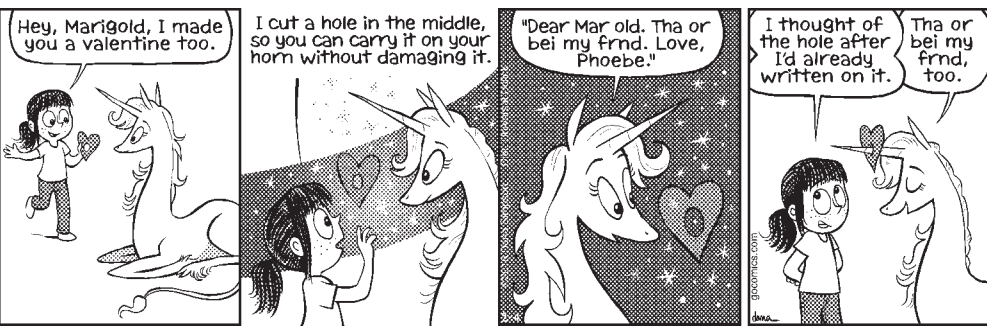
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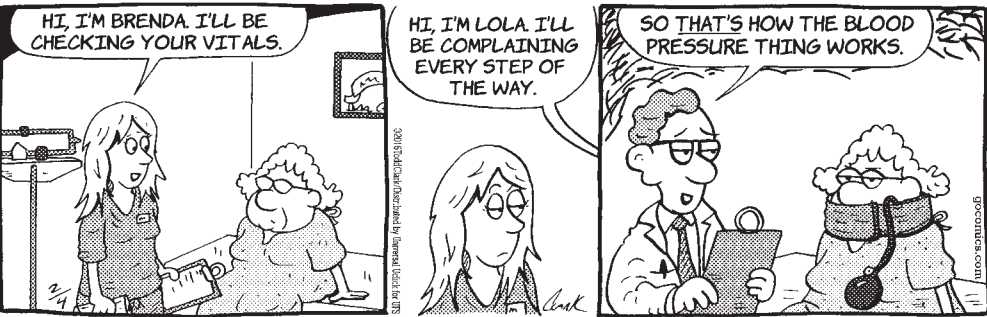
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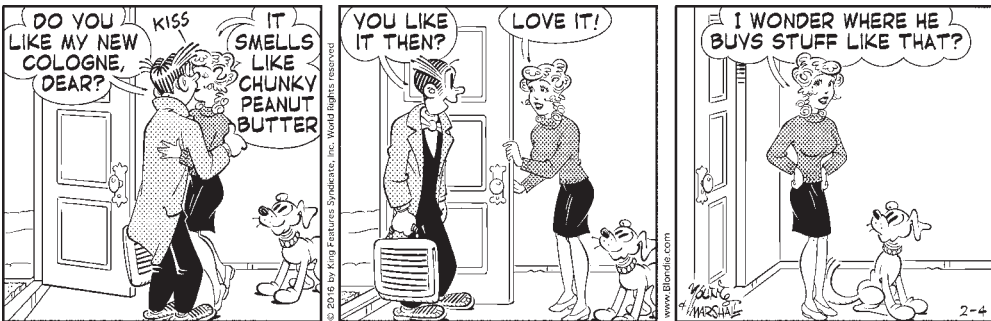
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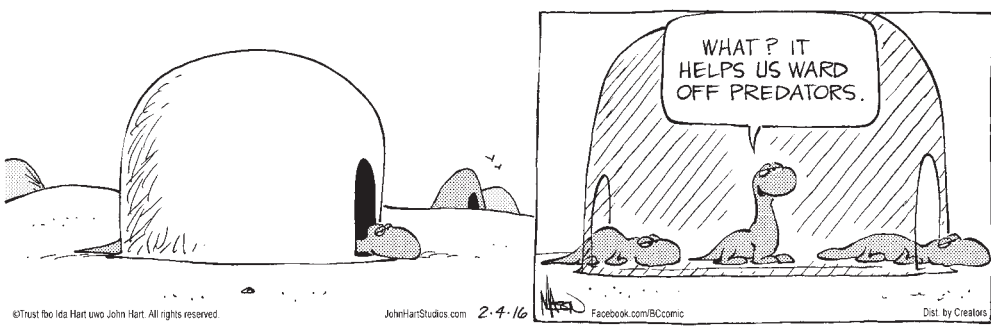
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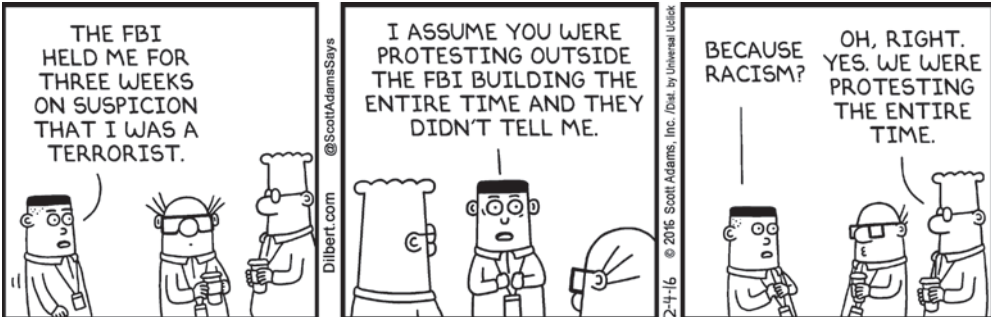
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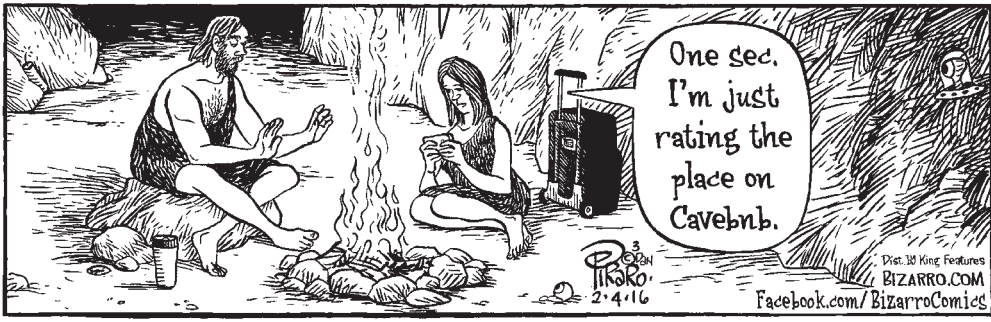
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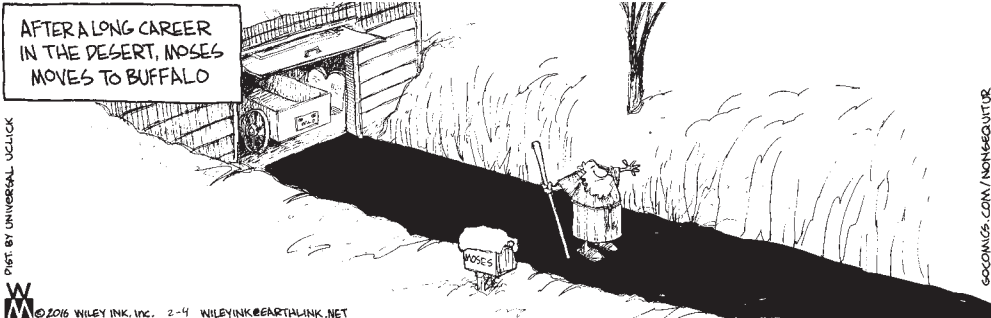
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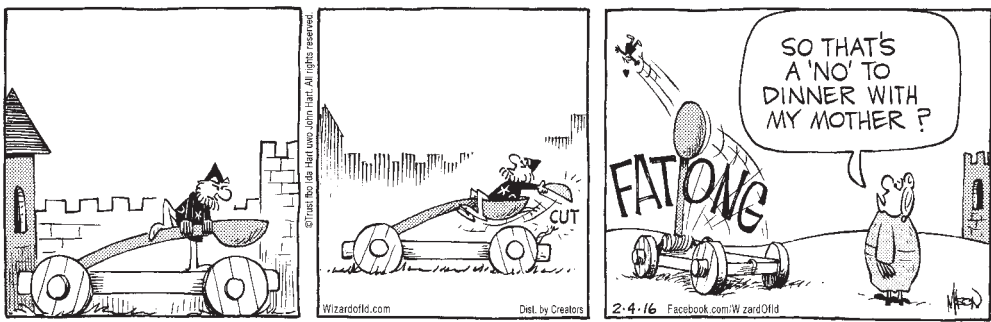
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