

Mom plays inappropriate game

Dear Annie: My girlfriend has a thing that she does with her 10-year-old son that I find borderline weird.

The first time I was at her home, while we were cooking dinner together, her son started whining, "Can we do it now, please? Please?" and she says OK and tells me she'll be back in a minute. The two of them then go into the living room. She sits on the sofa and, within view of the boy's sister and myself, he strips down to his underwear and jumps on her lap. She starts bouncing him up and down on her leg, pinching his butt and tickling him, with his legs wrapped around hers.

I asked her 12-year-old daughter how often they do that, and she said every night. Half an hour later, they came back into the kitchen and we ate.

Before I left, I said to my girlfriend, "I see he likes to play horsey with you," and my sweetie says, "Yeah. Well, I told him he's getting a little too old, but I figure it's OK as long as we only do it in the house." She seemed perfectly comfortable with it, but I'm not.

Do most mothers do this with their 10-year-old sons? I under-

Annie's Mailbox

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and
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stand some roughhousing, but taking off his clothes and bouncing on her lap, I'm not so sure. We dated for a year before I met her kids, but after seeing this, I'm not sure about us living together. — *Is This Normal?*

Dear Normal: And you only find this "borderline weird"? This is shockingly inappropriate. It's one thing for a 10-year-old boy to sit on Mom's lap. It's something else entirely when he strips down to his skivvies, wraps his legs around her and gets tickled, pinched and bounced up and down. Does she truly not understand what her son enjoys about this? Please suggest to your girlfriend that she discuss it with her pediatrician and ask about the best way to stop before she does serious emotional damage to her child. And if you still want to

move in with her, make sure these little shenanigans are over first. Otherwise, her son will blame you for ending his fun.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Old and Trapped," who resented her husband for sitting on the sofa all day while she cooks and cleans. Please tell her to investigate continuing care senior communities so she can live a happy and carefree life while she's still young enough to enjoy it.

It will be her true "retirement" when she finds a place that will free her of household chores, while also providing entertainment and activities amid friendly peers. My husband was reluctant at first, but ditching the big house and keeping only the things that meant most to us was the best move we ever made. We are only sorry that we waited until our 80s, but we are relishing each day here. — *Not Trapped Here*

Dear Not Trapped: Many folks in retirement communities arrive kicking and screaming, but find that they are thrilled with the busy life they have, and they no longer have to do much cooking or cleaning. Thanks for mentioning it.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Happiness is operating with the full use of your powers. Of course, you don't really know what that means until you are issued the challenge of taking on more than you think you are capable of.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). It all comes back to the question of what is within your power and what isn't. It's important that you do not count what was in your power yesterday. Focus on today. What could you change today if you felt so inclined?

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). When your body needs a workout, you move yourself around the block. When your brain needs a workout, you read. Today it's your heart that needs the exercise. You'll strengthen it by loving under difficult circumstances.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). There's a reason why you are attracted to things that, when taken in certain quantities, are dangerous. The thing you say will be your ruin will actually be your salvation, too. Everything in moderation!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The instinct to duck and hide is a healthy one to some extent; however, it simply won't be enough to save you from the responsibilities of tomorrow. Your best bet is to face the music, or possibly to renegotiate.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Some people think they have a right to judge the things you do. Those people are deluded. The only way they have power over you is if you give it to them. Don't give it to them.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The directive is to "work like a dog," even though a lot of the "dogs" you know sleep about 80 percent of the day and all of the night. Hopefully the

confusing message will be invitation enough to entice you to get more sleep.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Whatever you can do to avoid worry, stress and tension today will be something positive for your health, even if that activity wouldn't classically be, say, recommended by a doctor.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You'll get back much more than you give. This isn't what you were going for, and in fact it may not please you much, even as it causes you to give more and more.

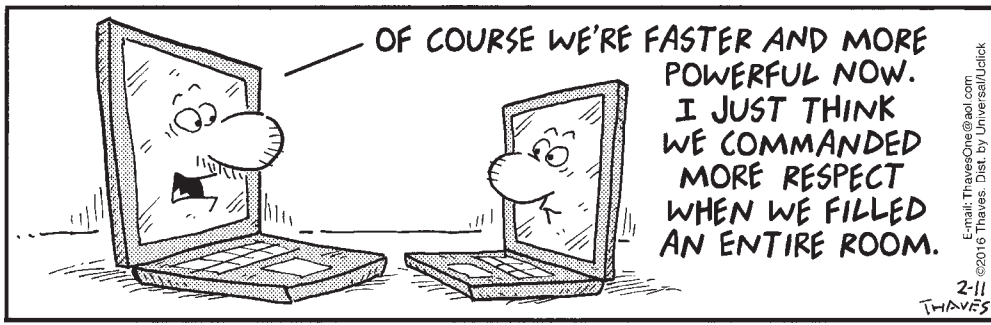
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Take the pressure off. Lower the stakes. Change the way you're thinking about the challenge. It is when you're not overly concerned with failing or succeeding that you will do your very best.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You may think that people aren't being helpful to you, but that's where you're wrong. They are actually much more helpful in their un-helpfulness than they ever could be by giving you the assistance you asked for.

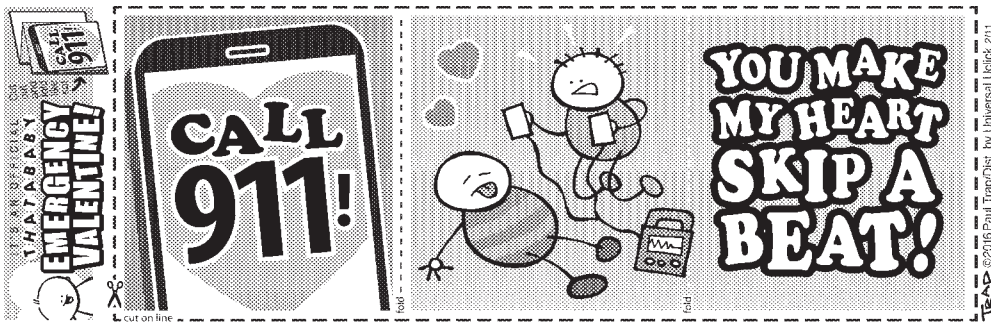
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The teacher will show you an example and then step back in full belief that you will rise to the occasion. You will; you know. Maybe not the first time, or the second, but eventually.

FRIDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 12). The pain of the past has been a gift. The healing, growth and astounding insight you've gained is a direct consequence of this. All the same, you'll be glad to be on the other side of it, something you can safely celebrate these days. March brings a financial bonus and June shows you an unbelievable adventure. Scorpio and Pisces adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 30, 44, 22 and 11.

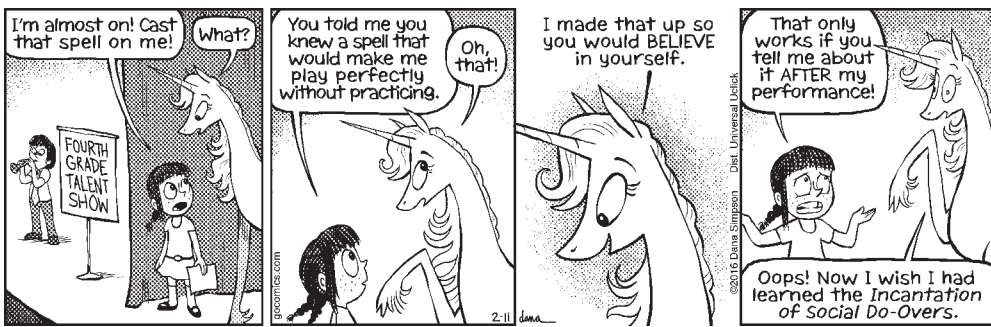
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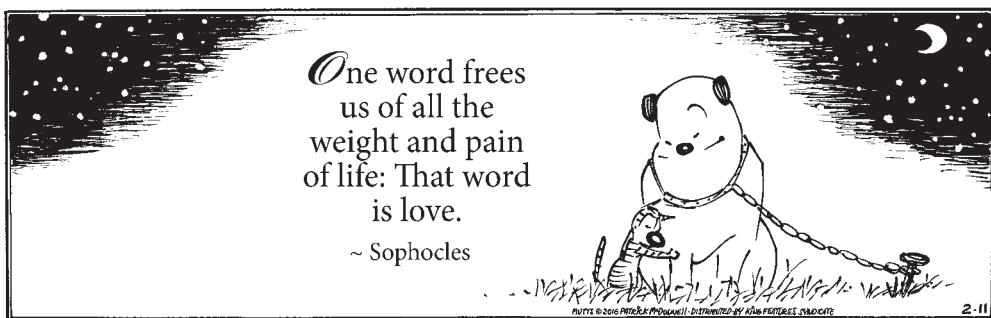
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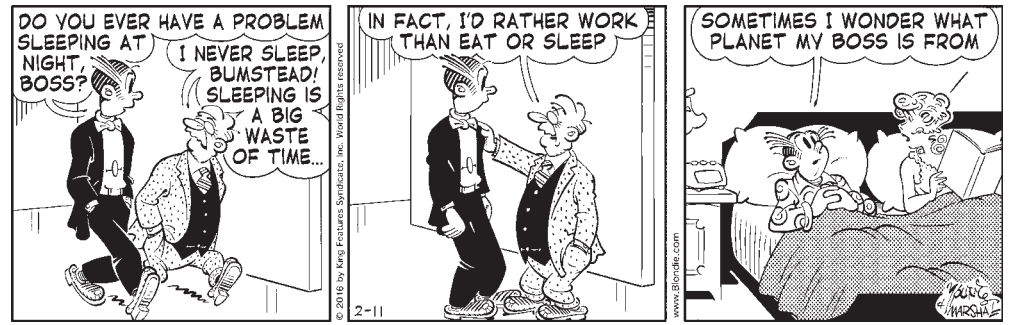
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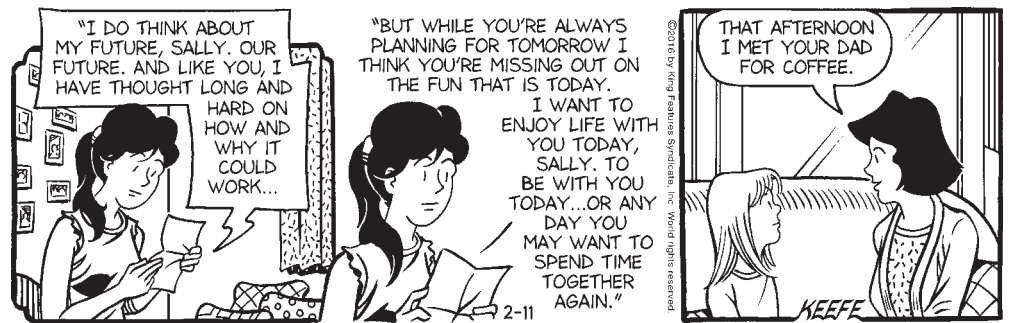
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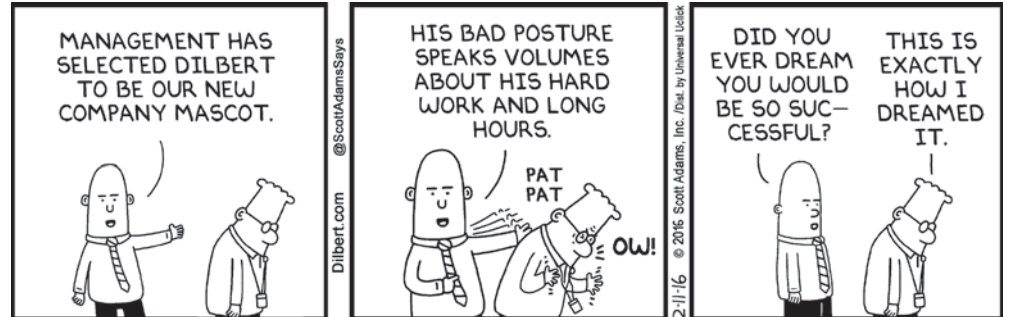
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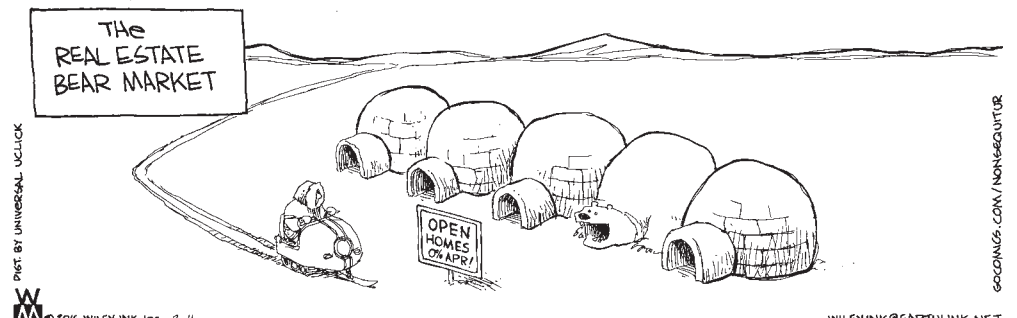
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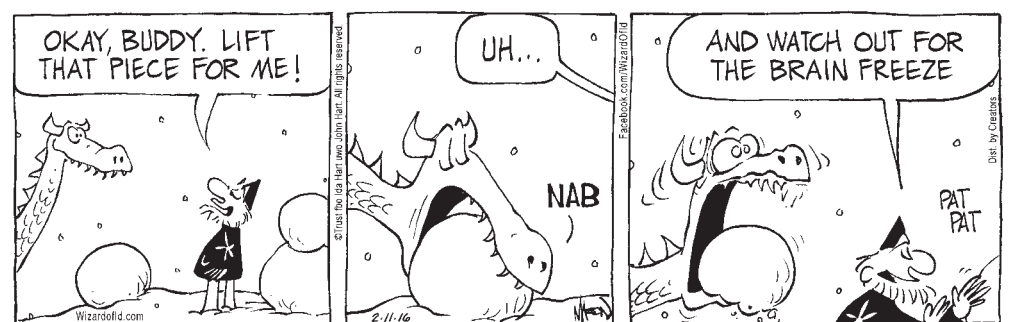
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