

Father-in-law's not creepy

Dear Annie: My youngest son, "Ian," is soon to marry the "love of his life." I haven't had much of an opportunity to get to know "Tess," but my wife has spent time with her and really likes her. Around me, however, Tess seems to be reserved and quiet. I asked Ian about her reticence and after some hesitation, he told me that Tess finds me "creepy" and is uncomfortable being around me.

I was flabbergasted. I cannot think of one thing I'm doing to make this woman feel this way. I have never touched her or leered at her. I don't find her particularly attractive, so I cannot imagine that I'm being lascivious without realizing it. I don't make off-color jokes. I dress conservatively. When I speak to her, I look her in the eye, not the chest. I can't figure out what I'm doing wrong.

I mentioned it to my wife, and she admitted that she overheard Tess and two of her friends laughing about how creepy I am. Her opinion of Tess has been substantially lowered. I asked my other two daughters-in-law whether they thought I was creepy and they were astonished that anyone would think so. They both want to talk to Tess, but I asked them not

Annie's Mailbox

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Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



to. My son said that Tess shared her feelings about me in confidence and he doesn't want her to know he told me.

Should I wait until after the marriage and try to talk to Tess? My other family members say to let it go and that she'll get to know me better with time, but I'm not so sure. Ian has been dating Tess for nearly three years and she's had plenty of opportunities to get to know me. Any advice? — *Not a Creepy Guy*

Dear Guy: We don't know why Tess thinks you are creepy. There may be something about you that reminds her of a less-savory character. Or her definition of "creepy" might be different than yours. It is also possible that Tess is setting the stage for keeping Ian away from his family after the marriage.

You need to discuss this openly and your wife has provided the perfect excuse to do so without compromising your son. With other family members present, especially Ian, tell Tess what your wife overheard. Ask her why she thinks you are "creepy" and how the two of you can overcome it in order to have a better relationship. Frankly, we would be wary of any young woman who turns her future father-in-law into an object of derision with her girlfriends. Tread carefully.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Please Stop," who is on a fixed income, but feels guilty when she receives constant requests from charities for donations.

Last year, between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, I wrote down every request we received from a charity. Using the smallest amount that I would have sent, the total for my donations would have come to \$7,151. As my wife and cannot afford this amount, we no longer feel guilty about not sending money to anyone. — C.

Dear C.: We wish more people could leave the guilt out of these decisions. One should only donate to those charities you support, in the amount your budget can handle.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Maybe it's because you woke up happy or because the work before you isn't as intellectually taxing as it was earlier this week. Whatever the reason, amazing self-control is part of the package for you today.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). There are two kinds of problems: your problems and their problems. Knowing the difference between the two and only acting to solve your own will simplify your life and make theirs better, too.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Insecurity is dreary. That's one more reason to make a full-on, all-in commitment to what you're doing, saying, performing, cooking, wearing, dancing, buying and living.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Everything you own, have and cherish requires maintenance to some degree. Relationships require the most right now. Tune it up by plotting some fun together.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Don't worry; you won't be showered with rewards and goodness until you feel ready for and worthy of such bounty. After all, the Universe doesn't wish to embarrass you by giving you more than you can comfortably handle.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Instead of being irritated by that person who moves much more slowly than you do, consider that there is much to be learned and observed at the speed of molasses.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Is it too much to ask the world to wow you? You want to be impressed! Entertained! Blown away! The one who seeks your approval won't get it nearly as quickly as the one who doesn't seem to need or want it at all.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You can't tell what's in front of or behind the other people. Do "you," without obsessing about how they'll take it. Their reactions will have very little to do with your stimulus anyway. Have fun with this.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You have to give to get, and you're more than willing to be generous. However, there's nothing wrong with checking out the payoff history of a venture before you take out your wallet or emotional equivalent thereof.

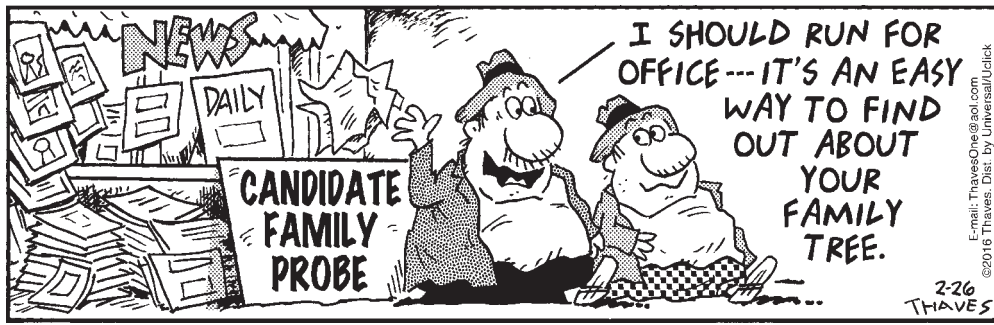
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Just because you love someone doesn't always mean that the person's choices are relevant to yours. Examine this carefully now. You may be reacting to something that really doesn't have to (and shouldn't) involve you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Those who navigate life with street smarts and social savvy are more likely to make moves you'd like to follow than those with only an abundance of theoretical knowledge.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). So, maybe the other person isn't technically "making" you happy, but it sure is a lot easier to choose happiness when this person is buzzing around you, all smiles and affection!

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 27). Publicize your process. Speak your heart. Show your work. Tell your story, and shout your love from the mountaintops. In doing so, you'll gain friends, followers and fans. You'll chase a fascination through March and become more intimately involved in April. You'll be trusted and paid well in June. October brings team victory. Aries and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 4, 1, 11 and 27.

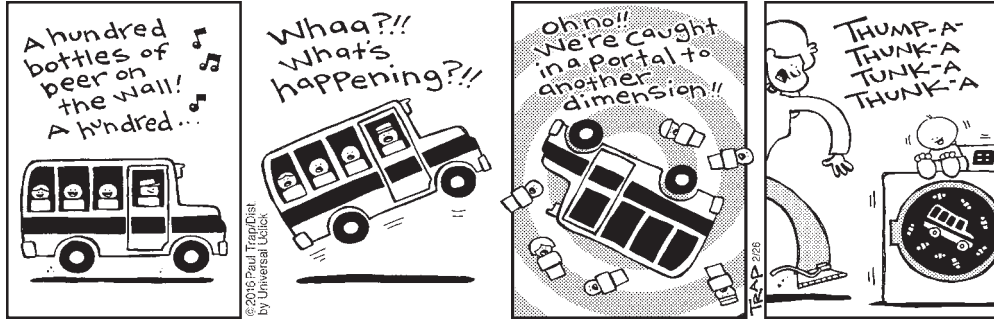
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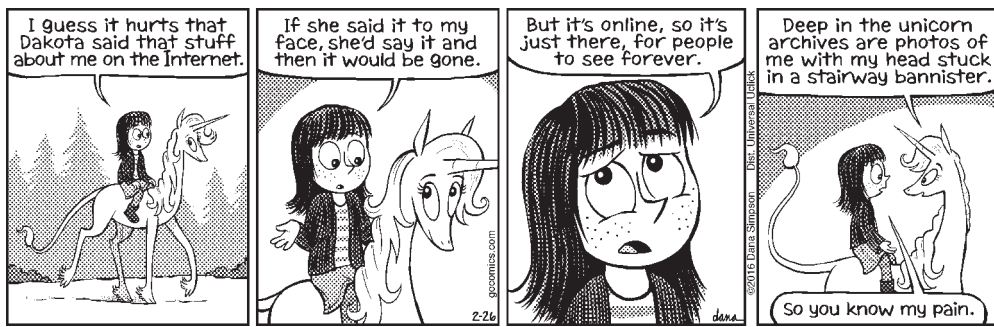
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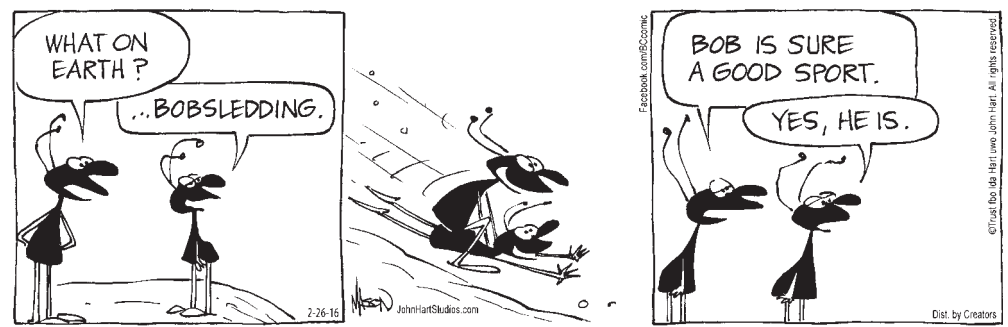
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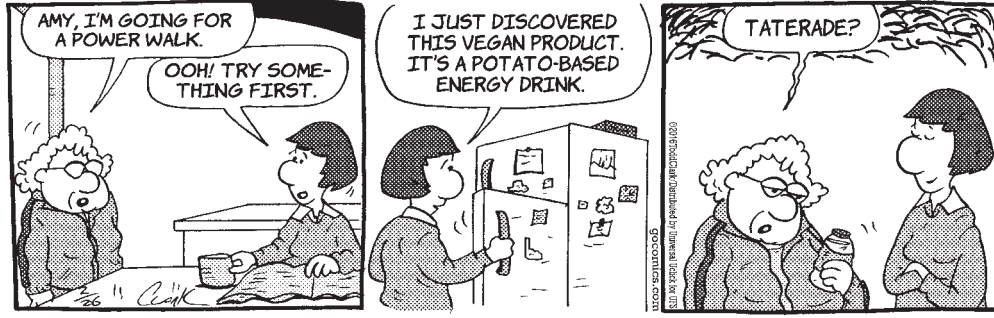
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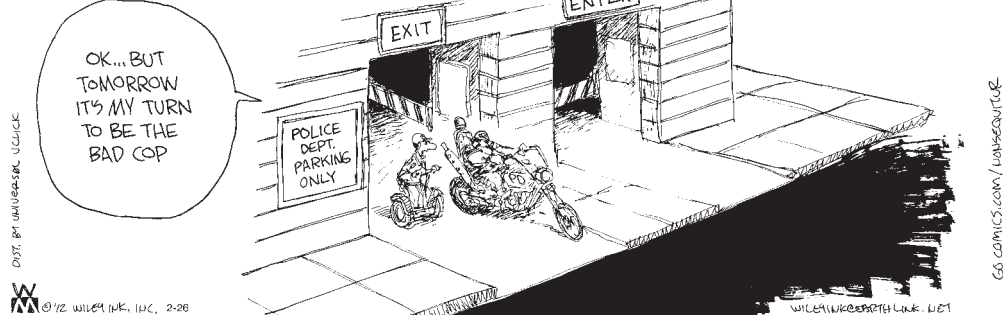
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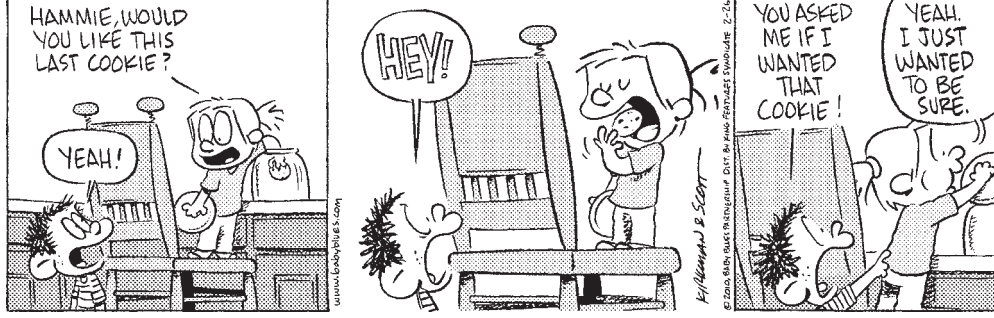
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