

# Gabbing ruins friendship

**Dear Annie:** I spent two hours on the phone yesterday with a friend who can talk nonstop and rarely requires a response. I have another friend like this, and it's exhausting.

I've seen letters in your column from other readers complaining about this, and you often suggest that the talkers might have a hearing problem. I disagree. These people joke about their "loud mouths," have never complained of any hearing difficulties and seem to hear when they want to.

One friend mentioned that she no longer has much of a social life, but I didn't bother to tell her why. "Sally" pretends to be interested in me and my kids and will ask questions, but if my answer is longer than 15 seconds, she interrupts. And I have to yell over her to finish a sentence.

I wonder if either of them will see themselves in this letter and at least attempt to change. I've heard of "listening classes" that can teach people how to actively listen. For now, I've got plenty of other friends who care enough to listen, so I've given up on the others. — *Middle Aged and Finally Waking Up*

**Dear Waking Up:** Hearing

## Annie's Mailbox

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problems are only one possibility for those who, over time, begin to talk nonstop. Another possibility, of course, is self-involvement or perhaps a fear that they won't remember what they intend to say if they don't say it immediately. So they interrupt and talk over you.

People who do this rarely recognize their actions. It is your choice to end the friendship over such annoying behavior. But how much kinder it would be to gently point out to Sally why this bothers you, and to remind her when she does it again. You could regain the friendship, and help Sally be a better listener. What do you have to lose?

**Dear Annie:** I'd like to provide a different perspective for "I'd Like My Wife Back Please," who has been married for 25 years and his wife suddenly hates him. He mentioned that she had been exer-

cising quite a bit and had totally changed her diet.

I was married for 28 years. My husband was controlling, abusive with our children and wouldn't keep a job. As the kids left the nest, I realized that I was going to be living with this man for the rest of my life. It scared me to death. I couldn't stand it any longer. I turned the corner and knew the marriage was finished. I'm sure my husband thought it was a sudden change, but it had been building for years.

I've come to realize, as women, that we do what we have to do. We raise our kids, we go to work or stay home, whatever. But the bottom line is, when we are done, we're done. And it sounds like she is done. To this day, my ex doesn't think he ever did anything wrong. — *Happily Ever After*

**Dear Happily:** It's true that problems can fester and, over time, can destroy a marriage. When they are addressed early on, the relationship can often be salvaged because both parties are aware of the issues and are working on them. This is why we so often recommend counseling. But when one person suffers in silence, the result is built-up resentment and despair.

# Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** You're always nice to those who are older, younger or weaker than you in any way. The kindness you dole out today will make a bigger difference in someone's life than you might guess.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** Unnecessary purchases go masquerading as necessary ones. How will you know the difference? Go without and see what happens. Later you'll have the money to invest in something that will bring real richness.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** Are sensual cravings a gift from heaven or an enticement toward a lesser version of the self? It is not easy to manage the want for delight against the need for spiritual evolution, but you'll achieve a good balance today.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** You've a talent for getting to the source of the problem. When you speak to the core of a situation, confusing and unpleasant symptoms disappear.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Happiness leaves no scar. If only it did! There is so much joy to be had in recollection. Take a souvenir from today's happy experience. This sweetness must be remembered!

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** The extra time and effort you put into your look is not something you do out of vanity; rather, it's in the spirit of altruism. Whatever you can do to make yourself a source of delight is a gift that you bring to the world.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Why struggle against worldly ambitions? You want what you want; there's a reason. Accept that some of the things you want don't seem like a spiritual ideal, but this is where you're at right now. What's to be learned from it?

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** When you're not sure if you should chime in or not, consider the very important role of silence. See if some well-spaced pauses might further your purposes.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** You've the courage to try for your exciting goal; then again, a lot of people have that much courage. Do you also have the courage to try again? And then another time? That's the rare courage it will take to succeed.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** While doing work you love, you're compelled to put more time and thought into each step. This is why you'll wind up in a completely different place than the others who started out with you on this project.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** When good friends want to spend time with you, they won't care about the details that go with it. The environment, food and entertainment involved doesn't matter much, so don't stress over it. What they want is you.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** If you're going to compare yourself to another person (not advised, but hey, it happens) at least be fair enough not to measure the other person's best result next to your work in progress.

**WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (April 13).** You'll put a fair amount of time into developing your inner world this year and it's a worthy effort; so much of your external life will follow your mind's echo. Reading, spiritual study and travel will all play into your enrichment. You'll be tested in July, and your high score leads to a new responsibility in August. Leo and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 23, 19, 42 and 6.

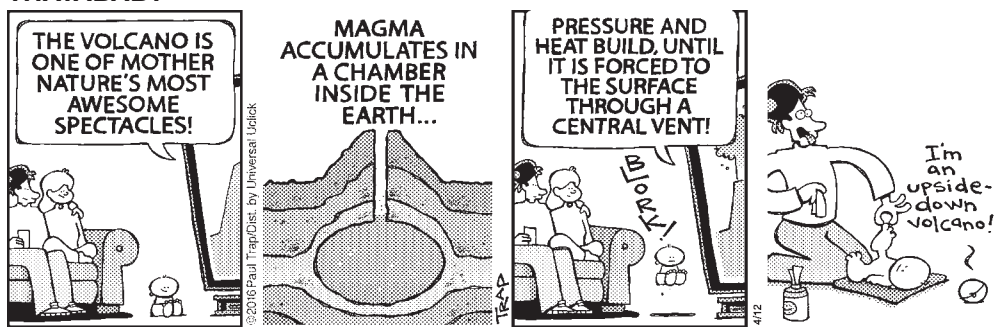
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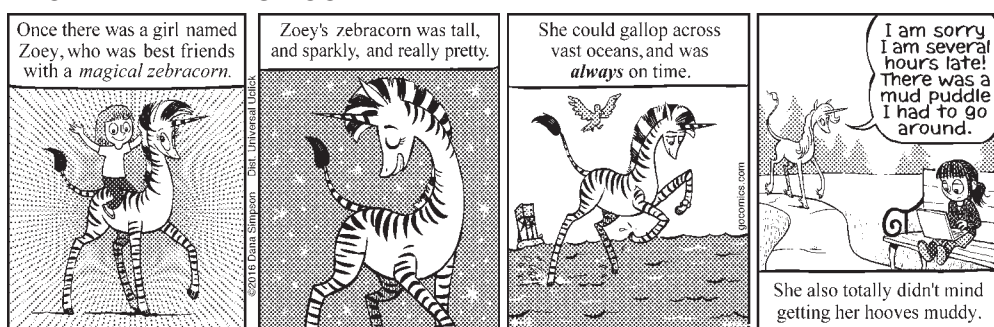
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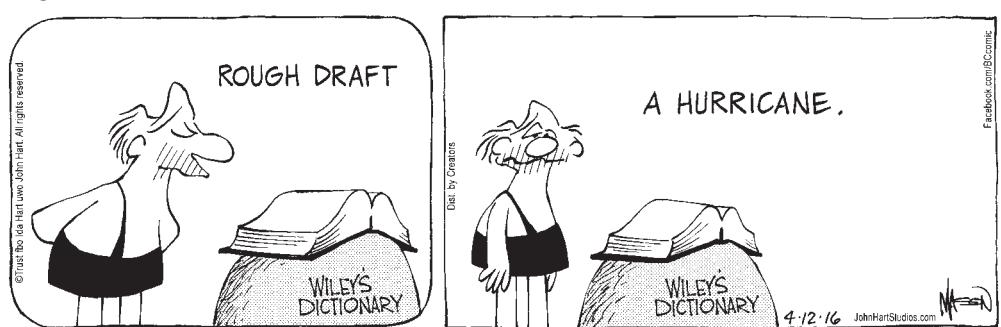
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## PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



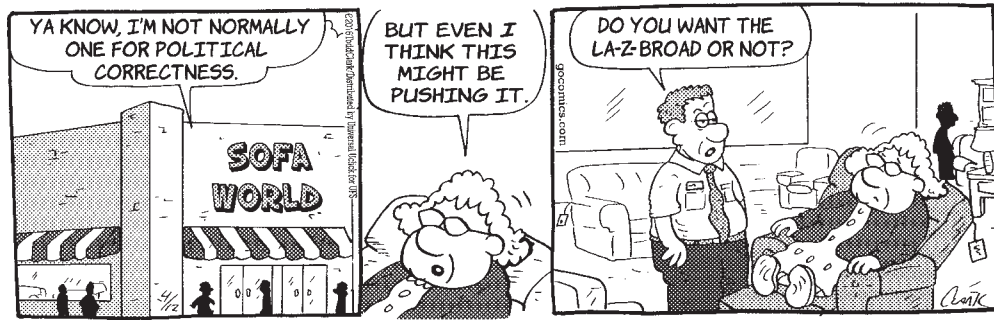
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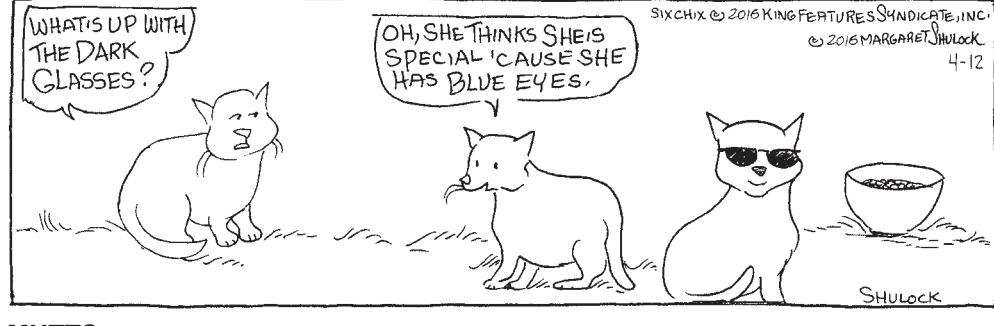
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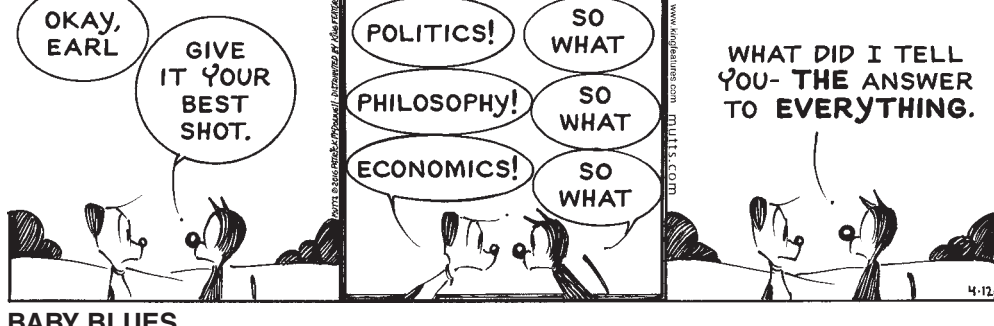
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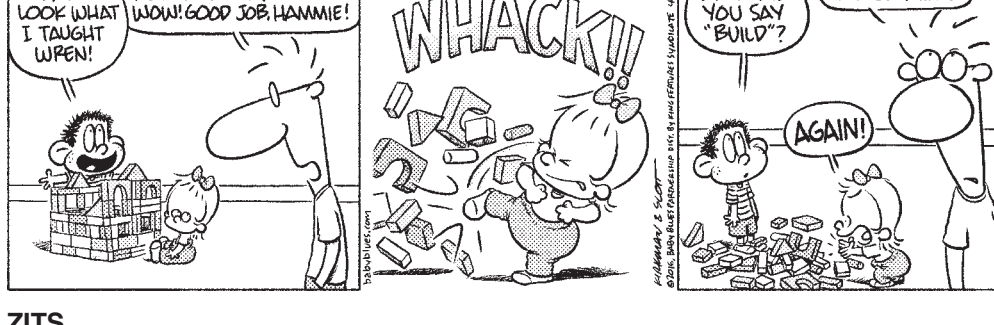
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