

# How to tune out co-worker?

**Dear Annie:** My cubicle is separated by a low wall from "Terri," the woman who works next to me.

Here's the problem: I might be talking with seven other people near me at different times and we could be whispering, but Terri manages to hear the conversation and always has an opinion to add. Every associate who works near Terri has an issue with her constant opinions, her butting into other people's conversations, and the incessant talk about her failing marriage, her difficult kids and her finances. We don't invite these personal conversations, especially because no matter what you say, you are wrong and she is right.

Management has spoken to the rest of us, saying we shouldn't talk about Terri when she isn't present, because it creates negativity in the workplace. Yet they say nothing about her constant, disruptive yapping during an eight-hour shift. The sound of her voice stresses me out so much that it's hard to maintain a professional manner around her, and I'm afraid that little negative remarks are slipping out.

How can we make Terri mind her own affairs until she is invited into the conversation? How can we get her to do some work (and let us

## Annie's Mailbox

Creators  
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Kathy Mitchell  
and  
Marcy Sugar



do ours) instead of blabbing all day about her personal problems? — *Ready to Tear My Hair Out*

**Dear Ready:** Let's start with the obvious — you don't like Terri and you have been excluding her from your conversations. She responds by talking and butting in, so that she feels part of the workplace environment. You respond with annoyance.

Imagine how you would react if you were frozen out of your co-workers' conversations. Have you tried including her? Doing so now and then will make it easier to ask for some quiet time when you both need to finish your work. But if she still cannot stop talking, the next step is headphones and a smile.

**Dear Annie:** I read the letter from "Perplexed Grandmother," who has been unable to establish a connection with her 3-year-old grandson because the family lives

with the daughter-in-law's parents and she has limited contact.

Your advice was good, and I agree that she should talk to her son about taking a more active role in his child's safety. I have another suggestion for Grandma to get closer. I have many friends who live far from their children and grandchildren and they have solved this problem with FaceTime or Skype. Over the phone or computer, they read books to the kids, have lunch "together" and simply enjoy regular conversations. This is what military families do, and it works just as well for everyone else who lives far away from their grandchildren.

Please remember this as an option. You would be surprised how many of the older generation manage to make this high-tech connection. — *M.*

**Dear M.:** We have often mentioned how easy it is to keep in touch with far-flung family members through smartphones and laptops. We hope those who haven't yet tried the technology will learn how.

**Dear Readers:** Tomorrow (Wednesday) is Administrative Professionals Day. If you have assistants who make your job easier, please let them know they are appreciated.

# Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Emotional-energy-saving tip of the day: Take a gentle, non-confrontational approach to communication. Avoid if you must. Defer if you can. Flattery and sweetness will work wonders, as will a gracious exit strategy.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** You'll have a clear sense of what you need to do. Getting yourself to actually do it is another story. Mostly this is a matter of being organized and falling into a routine that can be easily repeated.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** With Mercury as your guiding planet, you're keenly aware of the opportunities to be seized before tomorrow's retrograde. There's such confidence in your approach that others can't help but follow your lead.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** The club you're in now is a very small one. Cherish the other members. Only the ones who are in your league know and appreciate all the work that goes into playing at this particular level.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** You'll meet one who has succeeded at this game already and overcome surprising obstacles to do so. For you to win at this too, you'll need to train hard. Much will depend on the internal fortitude.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** You'll find yourself enjoying the very same thing that others are stressing over. There is opportunity in this dynamic. Perhaps you can relieve their pain for a fee. You truly want others to have as much ease in life as you do.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Moving forward can be scary, and yet right now you feel oddly undaunted by the prospect. Perhaps you sense there's something very familiar to embrace a few steps beyond where you are.

Rushing ahead feels like coming home.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Do a quick self-esteem check. It would be a shame not to fully accept the abundance this day has to offer you because you simply don't think you deserve it. You do! And how!

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** The difference between excitement and anxiety is a belief that you're safe in the world. You are, so relax. Once you do that, you can direct your energy in a most productive manner.

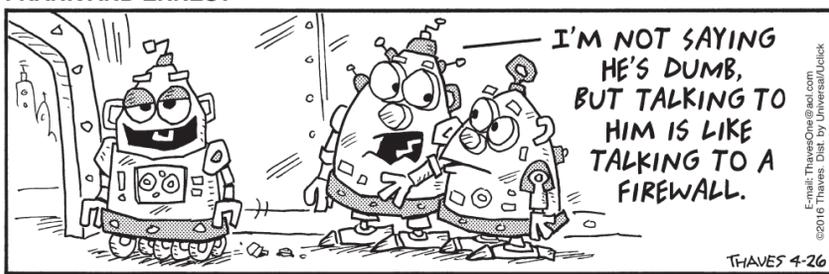
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** You'll follow a direction, stand in a line, see a need and fill it, all in the name of duty. Don't let this take over your whole day! There really is time to energize your spirit by doing what (SET ITAL) you (END ITAL) want to do, if you make it a priority.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Maybe you don't know exactly how to say what you need to say, but open up and try anyway. You'll be extremely effective in getting your point across; the language of emotions is universal.

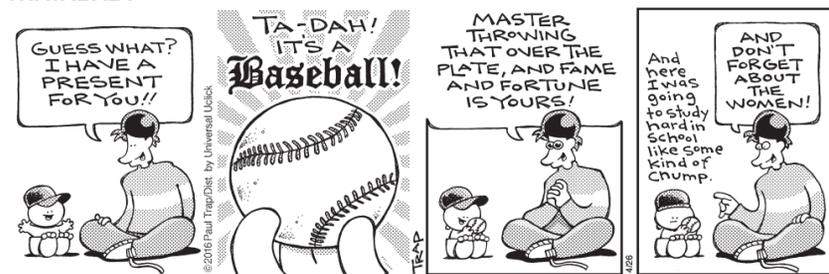
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Is the relationship progressing or regressing? Don't worry too much about it now. Instead, just be mindful not to get too comfortable where you are, and welcome change in whatever form it shows up.

**WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (April 27).** Your rules for yourself are what keep you on track, and you'll make some stellar ones in the next three weeks. By the end of May you'll already see the evidence that 2016 represents some major life improvements. A big, joyful love will touch everything you do. You'll be changing over the next three weeks. Cancer and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 22, 14, 11 and 29.

## FRANK AND ERNEST



## THATABABY



## PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



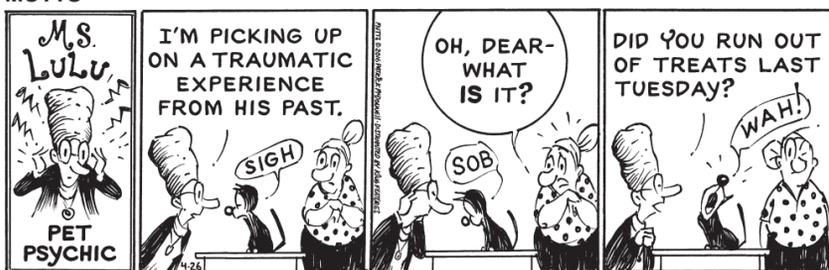
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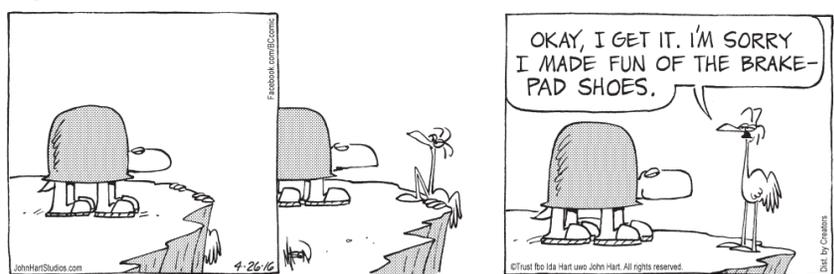
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