

Bullying husband irks sis

Dear Annie: What is the best way to deal with someone who is a bully and verbally abusive? My brother-in-law is very demeaning to my sister. He makes cruel remarks about her physical appearance, calls her names and criticizes everything she does if it isn't exactly what he likes.

My sister has been married to this bully for 30 years. I really don't know how she has put up with him for so long. I try not to spend a lot of time around my brother-in-law, but when I'm with the two of them, I want to defend my sister. I'm just not sure how to go about it.

Is it best to ignore a bully's comments or is there a way to put him in his place? — *A Bully's Sister-in-Law*

Dear Sister-in-Law: Please talk to your sister. This is not a bully on the playground, who should be held accountable. This is your sister's husband and while you want to protect her, you also must respect her wishes.

How does this abusive behavior affect her? She could be afraid or she may be ignoring him. After 30 years, she may not be bothered by it. Does she want your help? Would she prefer that you not intervene?

Annie's Mailbox

Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



Encourage your sister to speak up for herself or ask whether you can counteract her husband's negative remarks with more positive ones. You can suggest she speak to someone at the National Domestic Abuse Hotline (thehotline.org). But ultimately, this is her marriage and she gets to decide how to handle it. You cannot force her to want something better. You can only be a source of love and support.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Missing Her," the woman who was looking for a way to lessen her guilt over firing "Maria," the nanny who had worked for her family for 20 years. Maria's services are no longer required, now that her youngest child is old enough to drive herself around.

Certainly, this employer has paid into Maria's Social Security

taxes over the years, hasn't she? And also contributed to their state's unemployment insurance program for her employee?

If "Missing Her" can't "justify the cost" of keeping the woman who dedicated so much of her life tending Missing's children, she should at least help Maria apply for programs to which she is entitled. This will benefit her ex-employee far more than a farewell gift. — *M.*

Dear M.: You are not the only one to bring this up. Several readers asked whether "Missing Her" had been paying federal and state taxes as Maria's employer. We suspect not. A great many people who hire nannies (and housekeepers, etc.), pay them in cash, especially if they are not U.S. citizens. It is also not uncommon for these same employees to prefer cash payments because they, too, do not want to pay taxes.

But avoiding taxes on these employees is not only against the law, it does them a grave disservice when they are no longer in your employ and have no benefits. It's too late to do this retroactively for Maria, but it's not too late for others who are hiring good people to help them in their homes and who will become part of their families.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You want important things, but you want frivolous things, too, and those are the things that may take precedence, because you're fun like that. As you indulge in the lighter side of life, big issues are being resolved.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). People around you have money to spend, and you're just the one to tell them where to spend it. You have ideas that will create a win-win for everyone. And your ability to sell those ideas is particularly strong now.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Theoretical information excites your intellect, but how can you actually apply it to your life? You want change, you want improvement and you want hands-on training. Bottom line: You need a teacher who's done this before.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll do more because you know there's more that needs doing. Also, you'll hold out for the best, and when you finally get to taste the thing you want, it will be wonderful.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). If all you had to do was amuse yourself, how would you get that done today? Something will happen to change the game and make you think about your life a little differently.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're willing to push things a little further than you were, because you sense that a relationship won't grow until after the shake-up. Ten percent more honesty will bring the healing.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). It's time you claimed what you're good at, because the others are not going to do you any favors in this regard. You're going to have to point

the way. Maybe it's arrogance, or maybe just marketing.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your heart sends warm wishes and welcoming affection. Your head is going to need a little longer to get around to all these changes. Go gentle. It will all happen in good time.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Those who follow the crowd will end up in crowded places. You're a leader in this regard, so mostly you'll have the crowd rallying behind you.

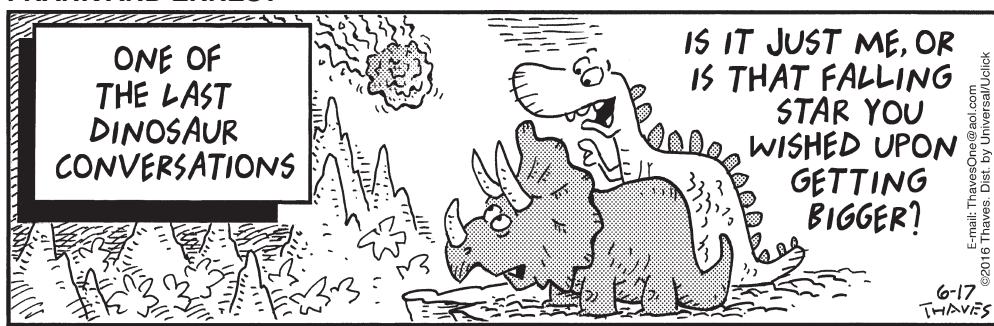
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Cherish the people in your life who make you more courageous because they feed you hope, paint you a pretty picture of the future and help you feel good about all that you're bringing into the battle.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Perhaps you feel slightly reckless, but paradoxically, this is just the kind of swagger that lets you take hold of what's really yours in this world and use it to the full advantage.

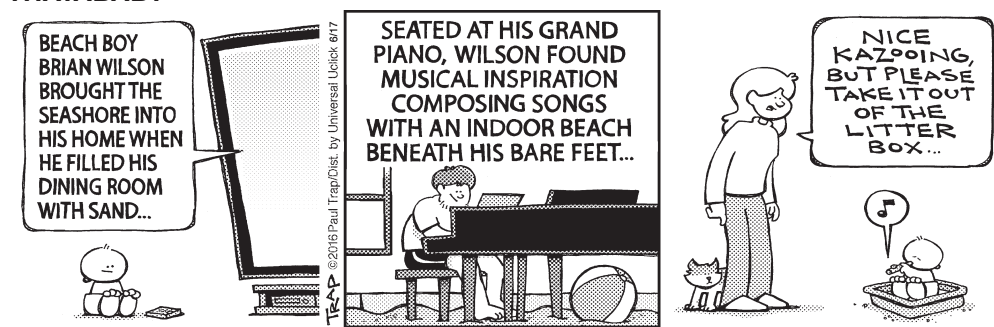
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Losses can be blessings, pains can be sources of great strength and the opposition is, of course, the best reason to improve and become masterful. You'll find yourself grateful.

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (June 18). Do you have the feeling that destiny is on your side? She is. Next month brings a lift and a bump to the right career track. Your personal life is exciting in August because new friends keep things fresh. September shows you lifestyle improvements. November settles a legal issue. Sagittarius and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 3, 28, 14, 33 and 19.

FRANK AND ERNEST



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PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



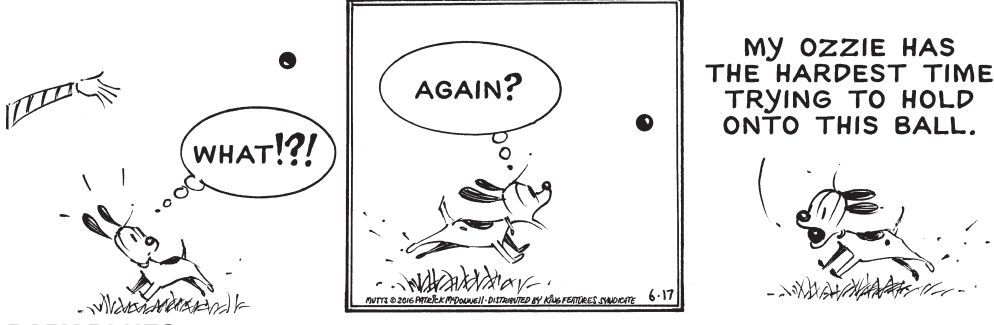
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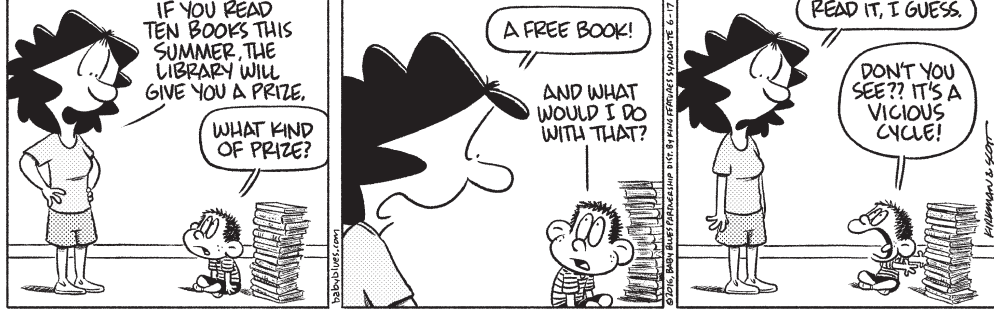
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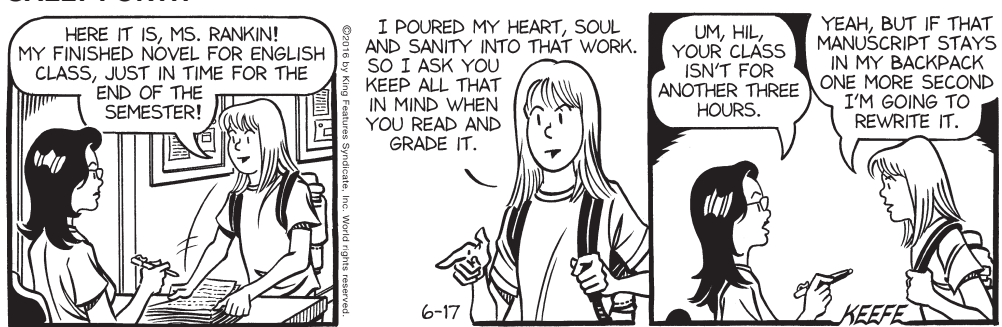
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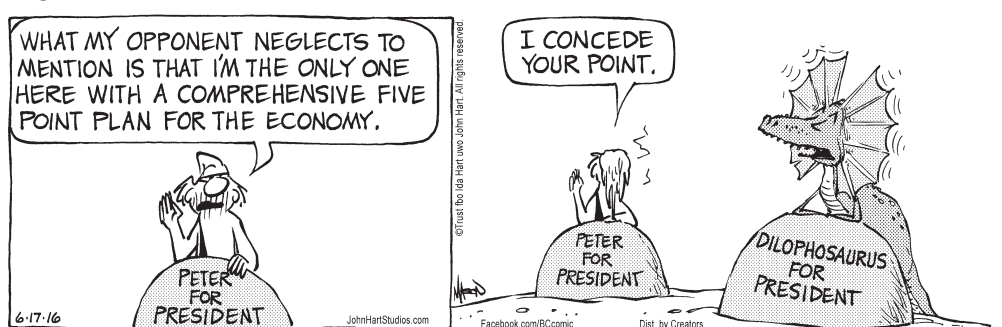
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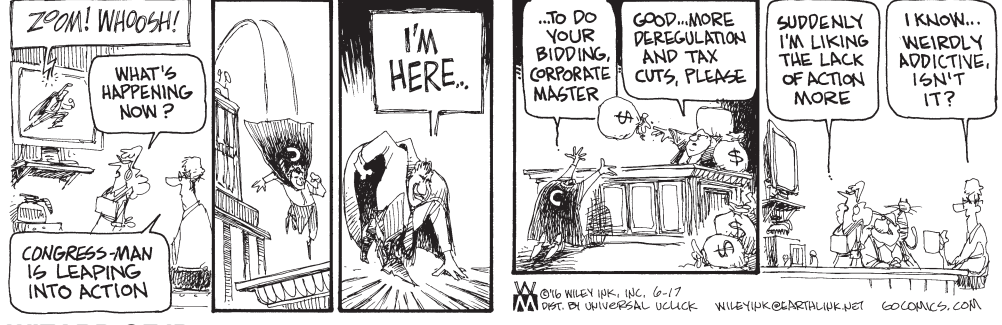
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