

Tired of unpleasant woman

Dear Annie: About 30 years ago, my husband became friends with "Rob," who was personable and fun. However, Rob's wife, "Doris," was unpleasant to be around. In 30 years, she never had one nice thing to say about anyone, including me.

Rob became ill and spent months in a nursing home. Doris often would phone me and say she wished he would "just go to sleep." Three weeks ago, he finally did. Doris now calls us several times a week. She carries on about how wonderful Rob was and how much she misses him. She is usually drunk when she calls.

When they married, Rob had a young daughter from a previous marriage and Doris had two sons. There has always been a rift between the children. Rob's daughter told me that when she was a child, Doris was terribly mean to her and has never made any effort to create a warmer relationship.

Recently a walkathon was held in Rob's memory. People walked in teams and the top-10 teams were entitled to a prize at the end. Doris' son and grandson were paired with her stepdaughter's two children. Their group left before the prizes were distributed, so I suggested to Doris that she choose four prizes for them. She returned with prizes for her son and

Annie's Mailbox

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grandson, but nothing for the others. When I asked why, she said there were no prizes left. But, Annie, there were dozens of prizes left. This really upset me, because it proved what a spiteful and mean-spirited person she is.

I told my family about this and they said it was time to get Doris out of my life. But we live in a small community and it will be difficult to avoid her. My question is, should I tell her why I'm upset or just stop answering the phone when she calls? I have not spoken to her since the walkathon. — *Upset in Texas*

Dear Upset: You are not obligated to remain friends with Doris simply because you have known her for 30 years. You apparently never much cared for her. Since you are planning to end the friendship anyway, it does no harm to let her know why. Please don't be unkind. Simply

tell her that the way she treats other people, especially Rob's daughter and grandchildren, bothers you so much that you won't be able to continue the friendship. Then suggest that speaking to a therapist might be life-changing for her. People who are so negative often have untreated depression.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Oregon," who said she was in an accident during a bicycle race and her husband had her cellphone and all of her identification in his backpack.

My husband and I run half marathons. He's faster, so we are rarely together. Here's what we do: All runners have a bib with their race number printed on it. On the reverse is space for your name, medications and emergency contact info. On my bib, I write my husband's name, cellphone number and his bib number. He does the same for me. We also have ID bracelets that we wear anytime we're running, even in our little subdivision. You never know when there will be an emergency. — *West Virginia*

Dear West Virginia: Thanks for the great suggestions. Even if you aren't in a race, you should have identification, including your name, an emergency contact, any medications, etc. It pays to be careful.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). It's your natural, loving response to point out an incremental sign of progress, or appreciate someone's creation. The support you give others feels so good to you, it's its own immediate payback.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Many romantic comedies rely on the story convention of two characters who can't stand each other, except for the fact that they are actually in love. Well, as you'll discover today, sometimes opposites really do attract.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). All you've absorbed has changed your purpose and being. You're grateful for the training you've received and you'll pay it forward in mentorship of others.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). In the current group dynamic, yours will be the first word and the last word, and the words that everyone remembers. Luckily for everyone, you're thoughtful — you don't take this responsibility lightly.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You need to influence the group before your plans will move forward. One way is to match your idea with an emotion. And the easiest way to do that is to turn it into a story and tell it well.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your focus on business dealings, sorting out professional concerns and responding to the needs and moods of a group will pay off now and then pay off later too so long as you see each thing through to completion.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). After the fall, loosen up, shake it off and wind it up again. The avant-garde playwright Samuel Beckett called it: "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better."

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Sometimes you hear the lie and you let it go, not because you like being lied to but because the lie is small and you're big enough to see how people get hung up on their defenses.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You gave your heart freely and it floated like a bubble capturing all the oily reflections of color and atmosphere and lightness; then popped. Don't let that stop you from giving freely again. Not every love is so fragile.

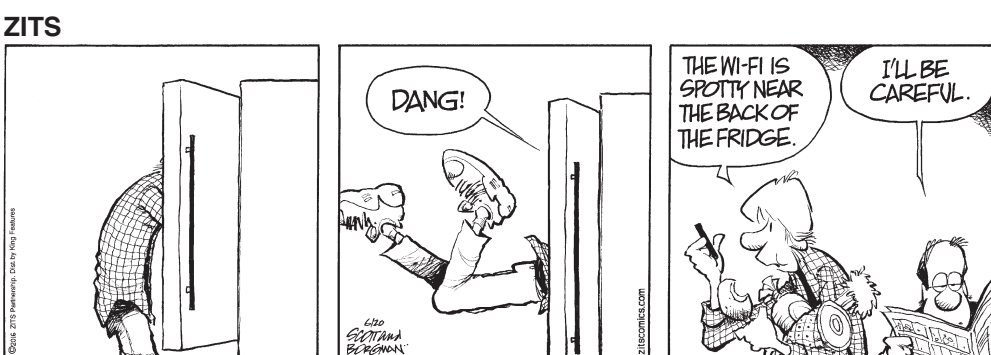
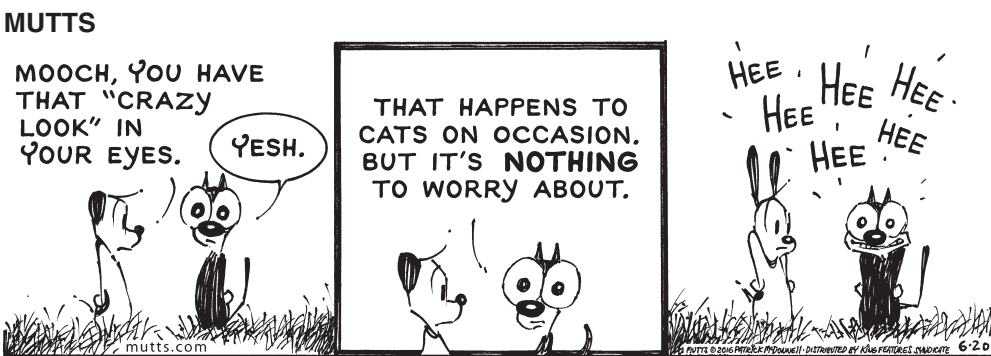
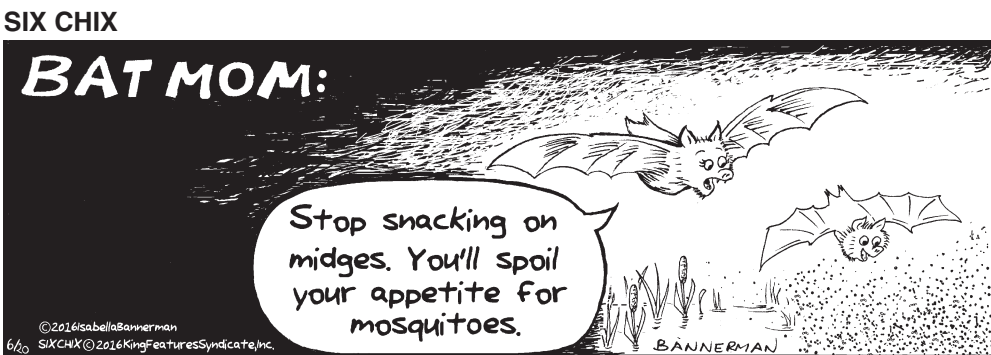
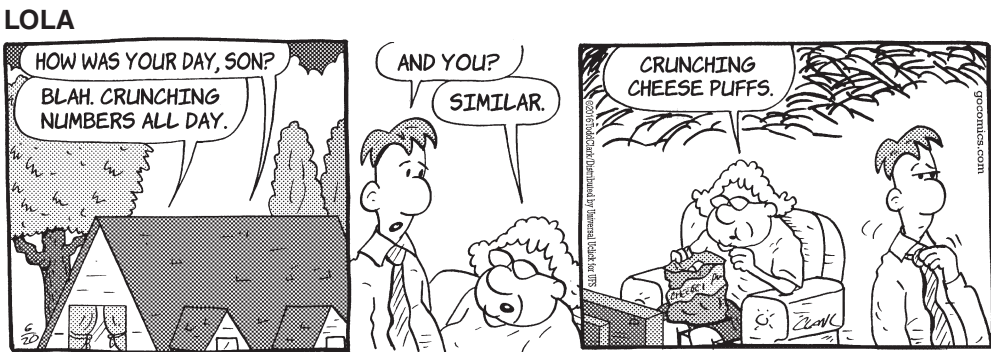
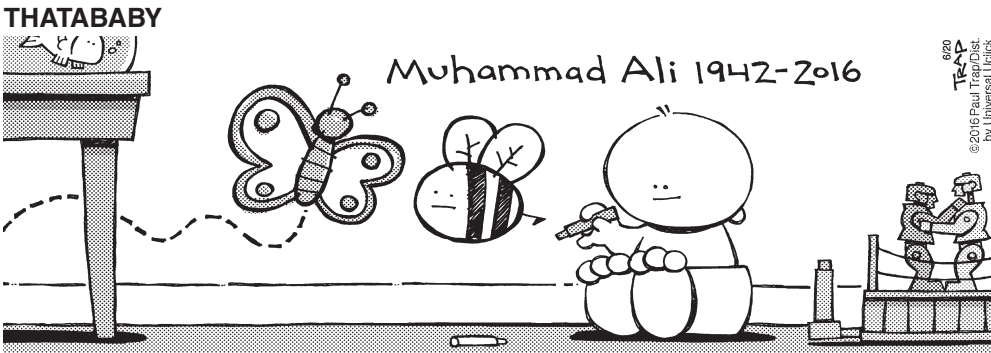
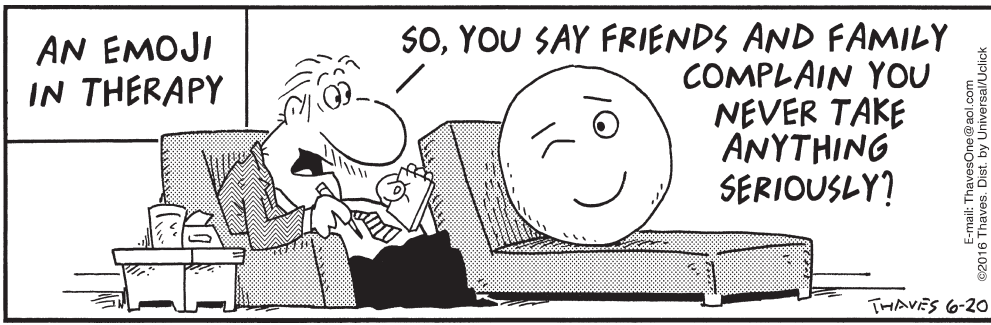
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Maybe don't worry so much about if it's a good idea or a bad idea just now. Action is the important part. When you act, you learn. It's not the right advice for every day, but it will work mighty fine for you today.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Put your teamwork to the test to find out what the strengths of it might be. Accomplishment with the group will be more satisfying and meaningful than what you accomplish alone.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Whatever you're doing with investments and earnings, this a moment to double down. It will be the move you smile back on two years from now.

TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (June 21). You're not trying to win it all, you're just trying to win enough to bring credibility and momentum to your project. You'll see the evidence it's working in August. Spend your bonus carefully in September. There will be another in October you can be freer with. Your feelings and thoughts are aligned to create a beautiful relationship dynamic. Libra and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 3, 22, 1, 44 and 15.

FRANK AND ERNEST



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