

Friends, or business partners?

Dear Annie: I am a real estate agent in a wealthy part of Southern California. In my part of town, everyone knows everyone, especially in real estate.

I have my group of mom friends. Some of us work. Others do not. All of our kids go to the same school. We see one another multiple times every week.

My best friend in the group is a designer. She's relatively new to the real estate world, but she has a great eye for design.

Another friend in the group is a financial adviser. She is a brilliant woman, so I hired her to manage my money, and I'm actually her Realtor.

I sold the money manager a house. I referred designer to money manager. Can you guess where this is going?

Long story short, money manager and designer had a huge falling out. Money manager claims she fired designer. Designer claims she walked off the job. Needless to say, they both think they are right.

I really don't care what happened between the two of them. I'm more concerned with my business. Was I stupid to refer designer to money manager? Should I find a different money manager so that we don't have a falling out? I like doing business with friends because I trust

Dear Annie



By **Annie Lane**

Creators Syndicate Inc.

Scarlett Johansson, but I'm above average in the looks department. I get my hair highlighted. I work out. I dress well. Yet I'm single.

I told myself it wouldn't bother me. I leaned in to my career. I went on dates, but no guy ever felt like the one. I had a few casual relationships but didn't do the whole "he's OK for right now" thing. If I wasn't super into him, I let him go. And I really haven't met a guy I've been super into.

I never did the online dating thing. I just wasn't focused on it. I have a friend who is obsessed with it. She downloads every app and talks about it nonstop. She talks about dating the way men talk about fantasy football.

I was supposed to have it all — to be happily married with children. I don't want to leave my career, but I am 34 and want a family. I don't want to settle for some schlub, either.

Dear Cliche: You're not waiting for Mr. Right; you're waiting for Mr. Perfect. There's no such thing. Why haven't you been into the guys you've seen in the past? What's been missing? There's a difference between having some basic criteria (e.g., "respectful," "employed," "not Norman Bates") and having an elaborate, Westminster Dog Show-style rubric. Be more open.

them, but I don't want to lose any friends if business relationships go south. — *Referral Referee*

Dear Ref: Good real estate agents, designers and financial advisers are a 10-second Yelp search away. Good friends, however, are a lot harder to find.

It's too late to repair the relationship between your two friends, but it's not too late for you to avoid a falling-out of your own. Hire a new person to manage your money. Explain to your friend it's precisely because you value your friendship that you want to stop doing business with her. If she's as smart as you say she is, she'll get it.

Dear Annie: I feel like a cliché. I feel so stupid. It wasn't supposed to be like this.

I'm 34. I graduated from one Ivy League university and got a master's from a different one. I don't look like

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You can think of quite a few things that are best paid for with compensation other than money, and today you can even put "meals" in the category, as your home efforts will go much further than anything you could purchase.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). When the energy is off, everything else will be off, too. Do what it takes to get your mind, body and spirit into the right conditions for creating what you want. Even if this takes a few hours, it will be worth it.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). When the rituals you rely on to feel normal get interrupted, that shouldn't displace your entire sense of purpose. If it does, it's a signal to come up with a purpose that's stronger, with deeper roots.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). If you pretend to be someone else and they love it, you'll be in a pinch, with lots of pressure to keep pretending. On the other hand, if there's no act, you'll never have to drop it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). At the core of this day is an innate drive to create something unique from your experiences. After all, no one ever has or ever will walk this world in quite the same way you do.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Before you would have reacted strongly to frustrations like today's, but you're a lot more patient now. When you feel frustration, you know it won't be long before your strong sense of reason takes over.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). What you're involved in now isn't really a competition, though it may be presented that way. Furthermore, you can believe in yourself wholeheartedly without dismissing the efforts of others.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You can't help

but speculate about what might have happened if you'd arrived on this scene a little sooner or a little later. This will inform your next move, but it won't change where you're starting from today.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You'll probably feel more like dancing around the work than actually doing it, and that's OK, too. If you keep your eyes open while dancing, you'll notice something key that could change everything.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Given the luxury of a long stretch of time, all the "maybe someday" things will be put off indefinitely, thereby remaining in that same category forever. Want it done? Give yourself a deadline and do it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Don't presume to know what the others are thinking or how they are judging the scene. One person's refreshingly entertaining enterprise is another person's been-there-done-that. You'll only find out by asking.

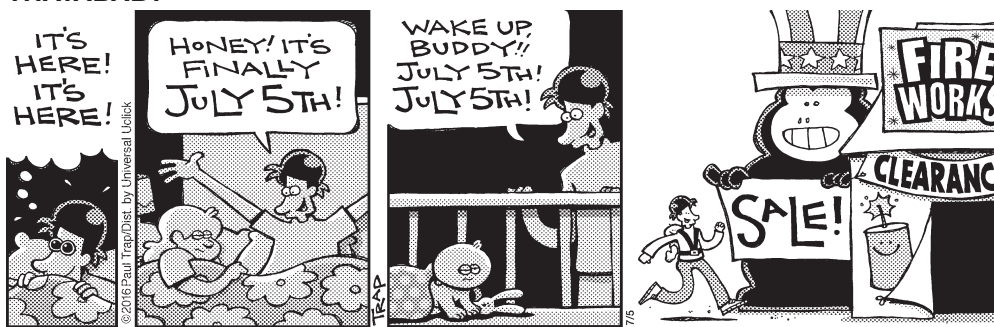
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're a true original, a totally unique presence in the world. So why do you feel like you're blending in, unheard and unseen? It's a distortion. Change the dynamic, and most importantly, change how you think about it.

WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (July 6). Love in reciprocity will be the joy of this solar cycle. Of course you've loved and been loved back before, but there's something special about the way this occurs this year. Something you've waited for will be yours within 10 weeks. September brings the right teacher to develop your moneymaking muscles. Pisces and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 46, 5, 8, 21 and 10.

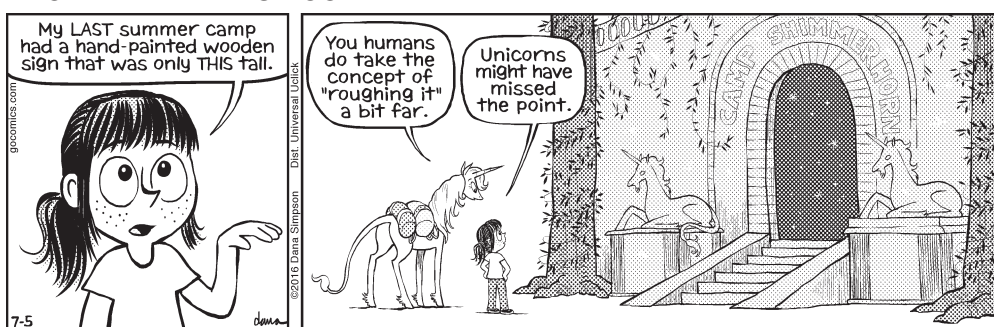
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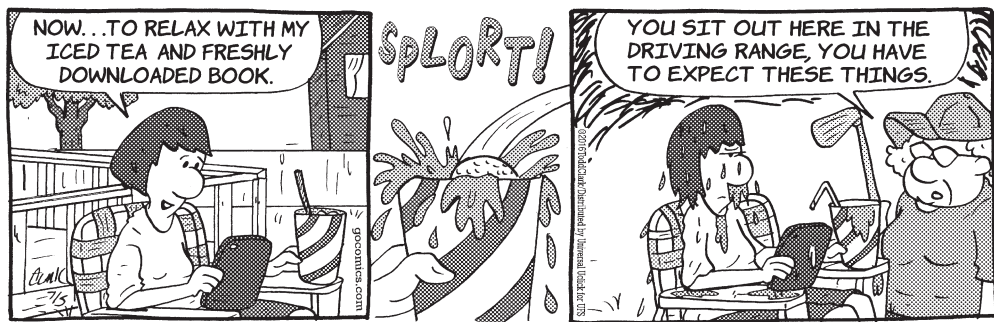
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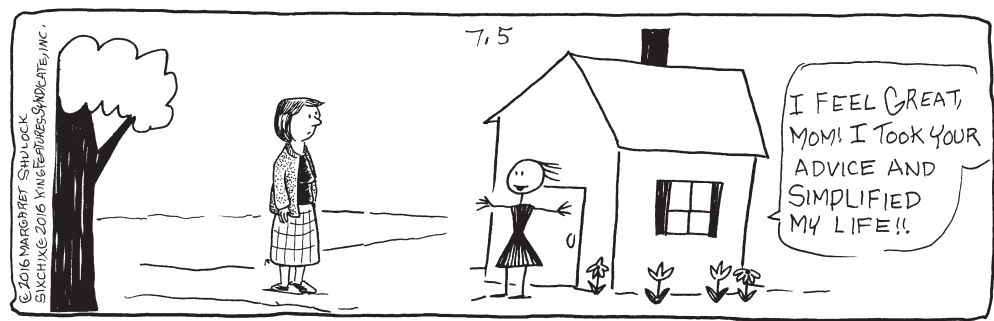
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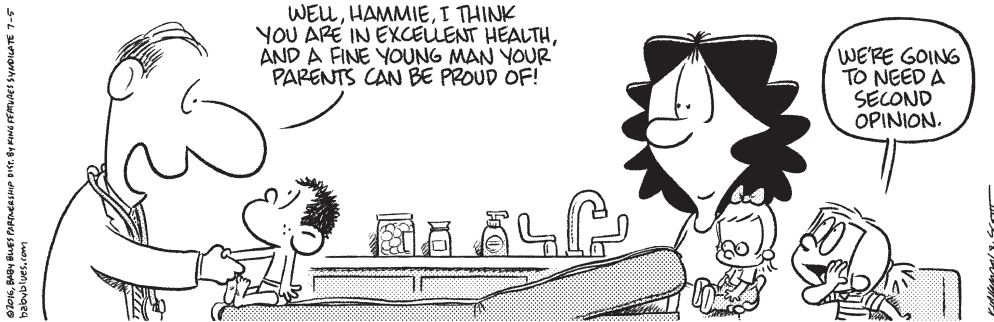
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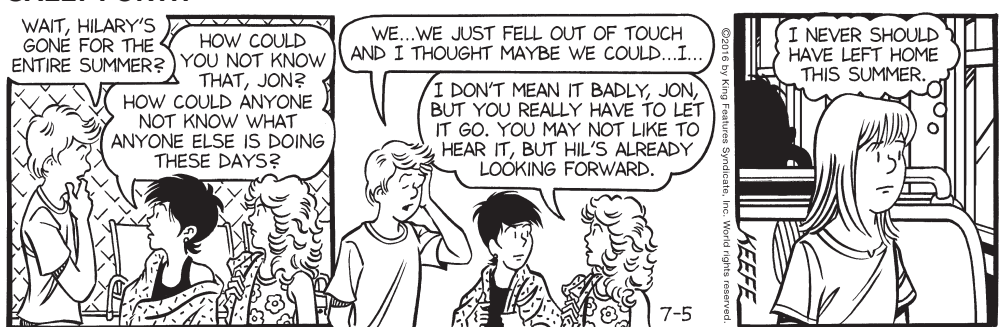
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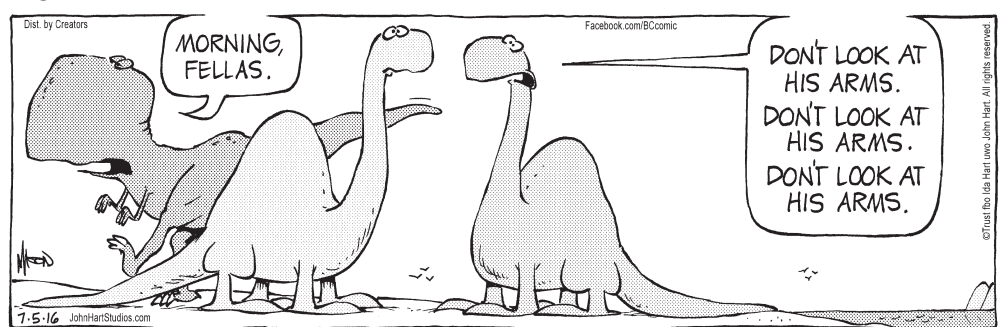
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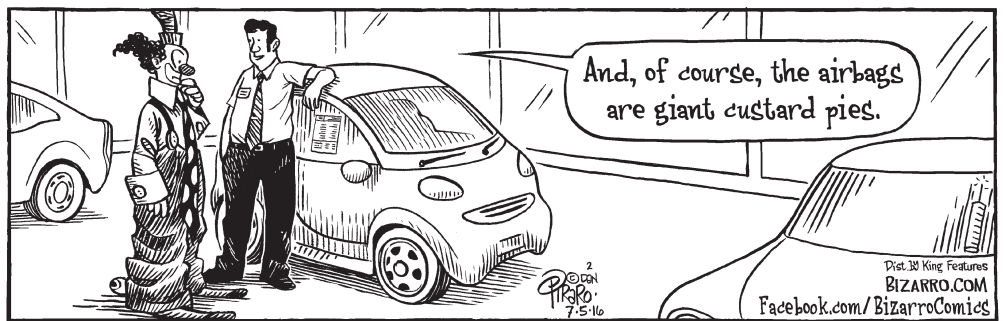
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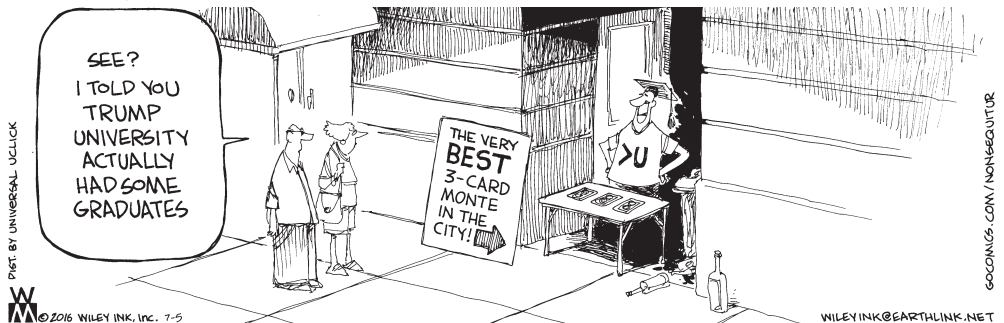
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