

In-laws make his blood boil

Dear Annie: I've been happily married for 10 years. During the time I've known my in-laws, I've gone from liking them and tolerating our differences in how we relate and communicate to dreading their visits and having very little tolerance for them. They always think they know best. And even when they actually do know better than we do and help us come to the right solution for something, it's explained in a condescending way. It has the tone of, "That's obviously how you should do it. Why didn't you think of that?" It puts me on the defensive, and then the whole day feels tense, although I'm not even sure they notice.

Another thing that annoys me is when my mother-in-law decides to start cleaning the house and reorganizing the cabinets. I know; it sounds nice — but if you knew this woman, you'd see she's being passive-aggressive. She makes little "joking" comments about our clutter.

Then there's my father-in-law, who tinkers with the thermostat whenever he's here until it feels as if we're in a jungle. I would never dream of changing the thermostat without asking in a house I'm a guest in! Even thinking about it now, I feel my blood pressure rising.

With every visit, my fuse gets

Dear Annie



By Annie Lane

Creators Syndicate Inc.

shorter and shorter. My wife hears me, but she's lived with it all her life; she doesn't know any different. And she's always quick to point out all the things she has to deal with when we're with my parents.

What do you suggest? — Tick, Tick...

Dear Tick: You'd better dial your own thermostat down a few degrees, bub! There's a lot to be said for picking your battles, and that goes doubly when it comes to in-laws.

The next time they're in town and you feel your temperature rising — literally or figuratively — take a quick break to cool off. Go in the bathroom and splash yourself with cold water if you need to. Stamp out those flames of anger before they consume you.

With practice, you'll learn to let the little things slide. And chill out about the thermostat.

Dear Annie: I live in an apart-

ment, and my next-door neighbor is on my last nerve. His TV is on our shared wall, and the sound permeates my apartment. I get that apartment dwellers have to deal with occasional parties and loud music and such, and I've always tried to be tolerant. But no one needs to watch CNN at full volume all day long. He's a young guy, probably mid-30s, so I don't think his is an issue of poor hearing.

We don't have much of a relationship. When we see each other, we nod. That's about the extent of it. I don't want to make things awkward, but I can't take it anymore. How should I go about asking him to turn down his TV? — Blasted Out

Dear Blasted: Ah, the soothing sounds of the 24-hour news cycle. What's not to love?

Drop hints that you can hear him. Perhaps the next time you see your neighbor in the hall, you could ask him what he thought of Anderson Cooper's show last night.

If that doesn't work, be direct. Tell him, "I'm sure you're not aware, but I can hear your TV loud and clear." Then work together to find a mutually agreeable level at which to cap the noise.

If this neighbor turns out to be not-so-neighborly, then it's time to go to the landlord and complain.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Decorum will matter, and there will be points for good manners. Still, there will come a point in the day when the discussion naturally flows to the things people are not supposed to talk about, and it's nothing to shrink from.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You thought they were listening, but you may learn today that the information you gave fell on deaf ears, or at least they don't recall it. Don't doubt yourself or blame them; just try to communicate again.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You are inherently worthy of love, and yet you still feel that you have something to prove, if only to yourself. Trying to impress others usually creates the opposite effect, but if you can impress yourself, well, that will be a thrill.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Even though intellectually you realize that your time is finite, pretending like you have all the time in the world will align you with the mythological gods, who are so much more powerful and creative for the luxury of their immortality.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It is natural to assume that other people are like you. They not always are. You'll be a good judge of character as long as you don't project your own personality onto the blank slate of an unknown person.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). A civilized life removed from nature only serves to make the natural world a more uncertain place. Navigating natural realms will help the animal inside you and promote health and well-being on the deeper levels.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You get along well with others, work and play nicely with your teammates and coexist harmoniously in whatever environment you find yourself in. And yet, you'll be amazingly productive in a realm that's

entirely yours. Find it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). When the unwitting hero of the horror movie puts a hand on the doorknob, the audience collectively thinks, "Don't go in there." It wouldn't be a good flick if the hero heeded warnings. You're not in the movie, though.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The theme is "romance" and what that means to you. Sometimes it's flowers and poetry. Sometimes it's a special night out. Right now romance is a state of understanding. Your efforts to this end will be most effective.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There are willful and selfish urges inside each and every person. Over time, you've learned to curb these tendencies. Witnessing them in others will be a little frustrating for you, though you can relate, so you have compassion.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). People want to be near you and will gather where you are. Whether it's at home or the lunch table or your work area, you'll have to give major hints to get anyone to leave.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Working toward compromise is the natural state of relationships now, including the relationship between your lower and higher urges and instincts. If you can balance those, you can balance anything.

THURSDAY'S BIRTHDAY (July 7). Ask the universe to wow you and the wonders will keep unfolding. You're willing to trade in your curiosity for skepticism, because this feels better to you. Bonus: Curiosity and optimism attract more interesting, creative and impressive people to you. September features a loving commitment. December brings a new deal. Aquarius and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are 7, 20, 12, 14 and 32.

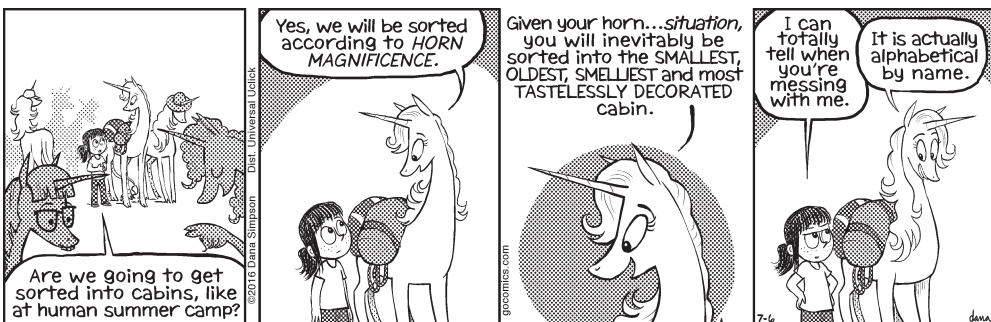
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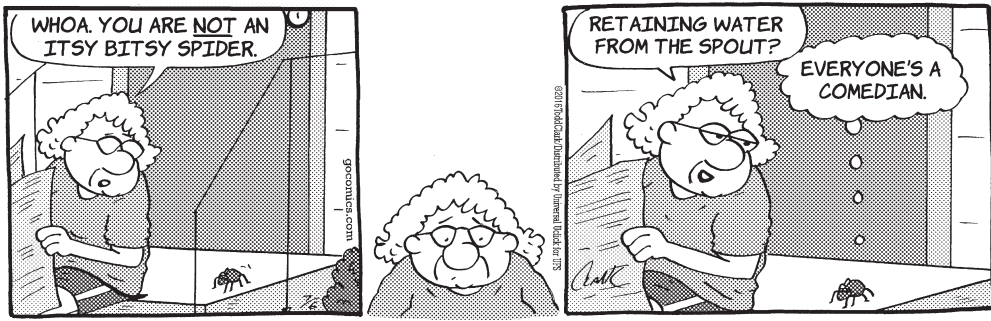
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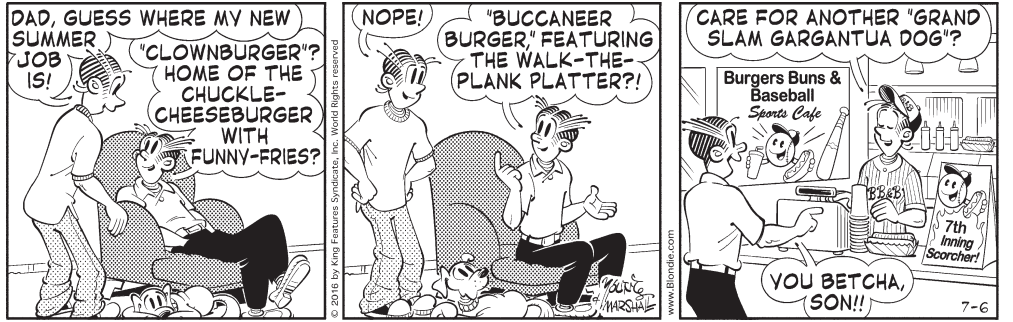
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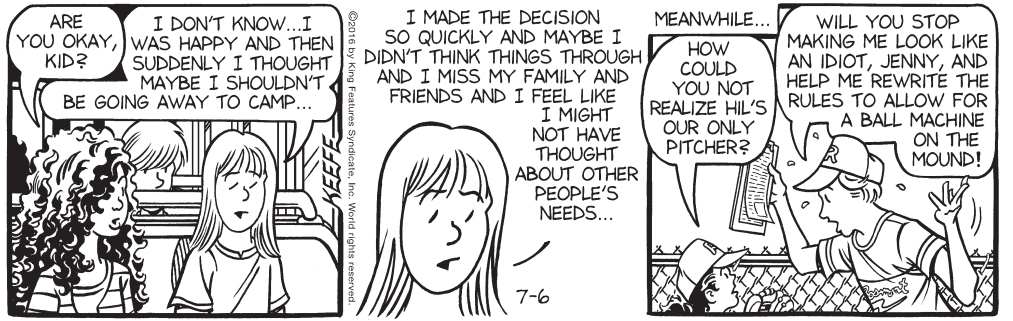
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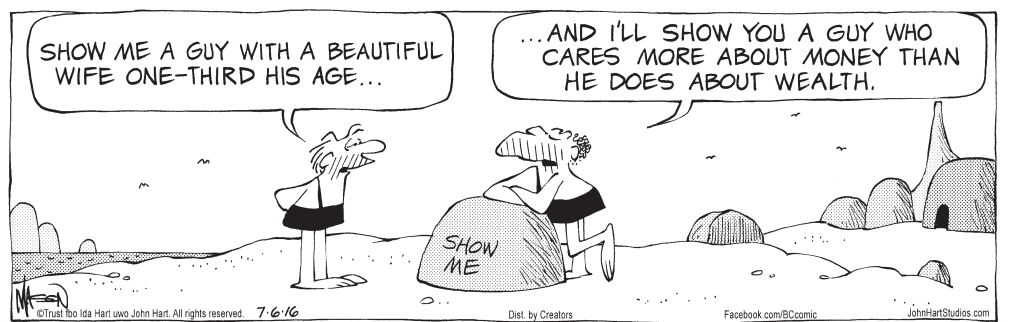
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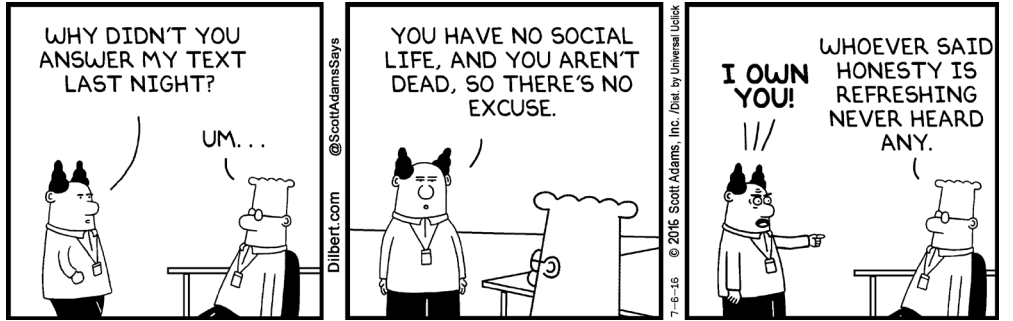
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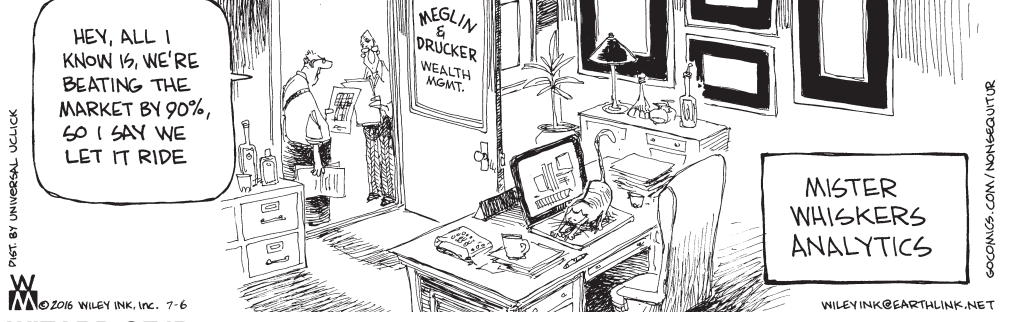
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