

Friend gone when needed

Dear Annie: My husband was recently transferred at work to New York City from Chicago. That meant having to start all over again. Three years ago, we had a beautiful baby girl, Sophia. As a stay-at-home mom, I had worked hard at building a strong support network in Chicago with friends and family. When we first arrived at Sophia's new school, we found people to be a little standoffish. It was not the Midwestern friendliness we were used to.

A month passed by and still no friends or community. My husband and I just thought this would be the new normal. Then I met Chloe at Central Park. She has a little girl, named Madeline, who is just Sophia's age. She's originally from Cleveland. Her husband had been transferred to New York the previous year. She had the same Midwestern friendliness and warmth that were so familiar. Needless to say, we instantly became great friends. She introduced me to some of the other neighborhood moms. Within weeks, I felt a sense of community and was beginning to love my new city.

One sunny spring day while Chloe and I were pushing our daughters on the swings at Central Park, she said, "I'm pregnant. We're expecting in September." I was so surprised. I was pregnant, too, but had wanted to wait

Dear Annie



By **Annie Lane**

Creators Syndicate Inc.

the traditional 12 weeks before telling anyone. I was so caught off guard that I blurted out, "I am, as well." Chloe was so enthusiastic about the whole thing, going on and on about how the new babies could be best friends like our daughters or how they could get married someday. It was so nice to have a pregnant buddy. We could commiserate about how exhausted we felt and how none of our clothes fit anymore. I was really starting to love New York — until my husband and I went for our 12-week checkup. There was no heartbeat. A few days later, I miscarried.

My husband and I were both so sad. At first, all I wanted to do was stay in bed all day and cry. But I knew that I had to be strong for my daughter and husband. I joined a support group for women who have miscarried and, day by day, began to feel better. The group

encouraged me to reach out to friends, and that is just what I did. I shared my tragedy with Chloe. Her eyes became watery as I shared the news with her. But very quickly, she changed the subject. As time went on, she never spoke of her pregnancy amid a growing belly. When she delivered her baby in September, she slowly started calling me less and not making plans.

Since my miscarriage, I have felt a huge drift in our friendship right at a time when I have needed a friend the most. Why do you think she is acting this way? — *Friend in Need*

Dear Friend: First off, I'm so sorry for your loss. It sounds as if you and your husband have taken all the right steps to properly grieve.

Chloe seems like a great friend when everything is going well and easy. Try telling her how you feel. She may be feeling guilty that she has a healthy baby and you don't, and she may think you'd be uncomfortable around her. Make clear to her that you just need a friend.

If you don't see a change in the friendship after that, dump her. You don't need someone in your life who heads for the hills when things get a little complicated. In a city of 8.4 million people, surely you can find a friend who will be there for you when times are good or bad.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). When things drop off your schedule naturally, don't fight it or try to reschedule right away. Let it happen. You will experience a greater level of time-affluence and feel truly rich!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Nothing takes you out of the moment like criticizing your own thoughts. Also, it's impossible to be fully awake and mindful and judge all of your thoughts at the same time. So how about you go easy on yourself?

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Has a perfect stranger ever captured your attention to the point where you project an entire persona onto the person? Should you actually get to know this person, be careful not to let that made-up persona blur into the reality.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You crave a sense of spaciousness — in your environment, in your head, in your soul. You can't rid the whole world of clutter, but you can start with a room, and that will begin the journey.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). There are forces at work that you don't know about and won't know about until the plot thickens. Suffice it to say, you'll have angels on your side when you need them. Let that comfort and inspire you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Because you really love a person, you'll sacrifice much to make things work, get along and accommodate wishes. If you also happen to be extremely compatible with this person, even such efforts won't require much energy.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You can't blame a person for just trying to have fun, even if your kind of fun is in direct opposition to this person's. Probably the most graceful thing will be to remove yourself from the situation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Maybe you've

behaved badly to someone in the past, but of course that doesn't make you bad in general. Perhaps you need a new cast and setting. Different people (and environments) bring out different sides of you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You are not your thoughts. Thoughts are just ideas passing through the atmosphere, most of them not even generated by you, just yours to claim or not claim depending on what best suits the person you want to be.

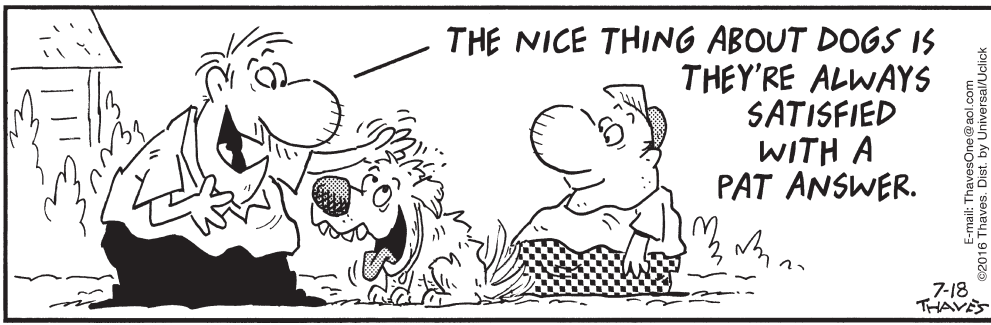
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Once you learn a new way to make money you'll experience a financial upswing. It will be a day to investigate options, poke around, ask questions and try to determine what interests you enough to follow through to the finish.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You are there for your friend, regardless of the details of this person's troubles. First of all, it will be a while before you even know those details, and second of all, that's the kind of person you are.

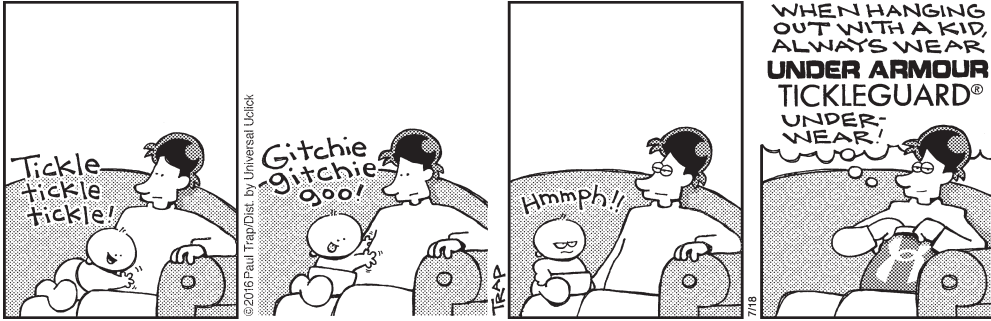
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You may have emotionally moved on from a situation, but there are remnants of it everywhere, not to mention a few practical matters connected with it that need to be cleared up. Today is a good day to start.

TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (July 19). It doesn't make sense, but you will get younger as the year progresses. What used to worry you will no longer be an issue after July. What you used to approach seriously you'll approach playfully in August. You'll transform your living space with the bonus you receive in September. In October expect love letters and visits. Virgo and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 17, 40, 22 and 8.

FRANK AND ERNEST



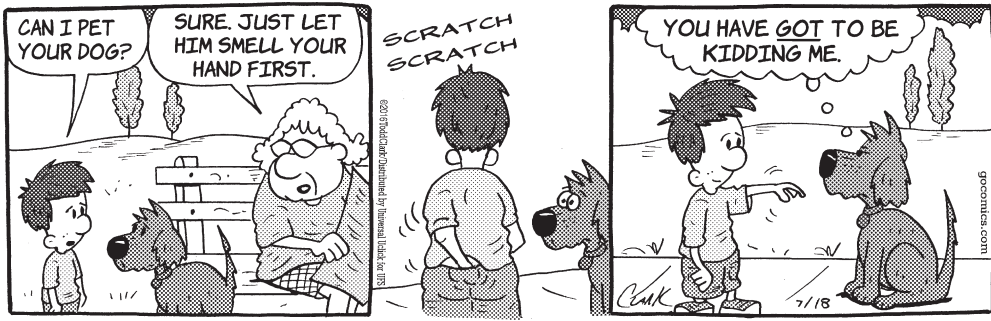
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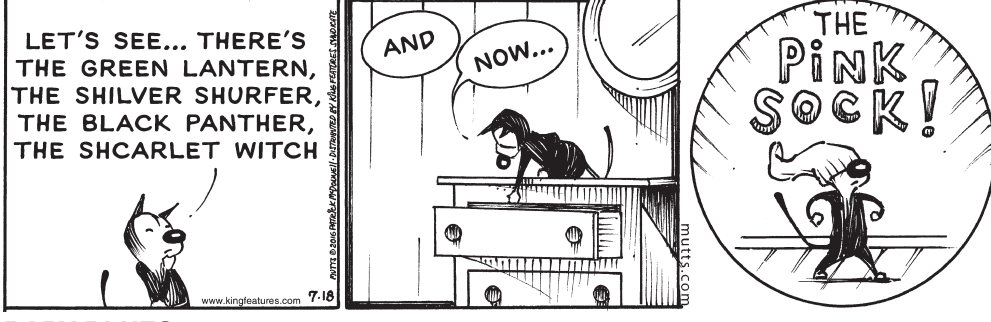
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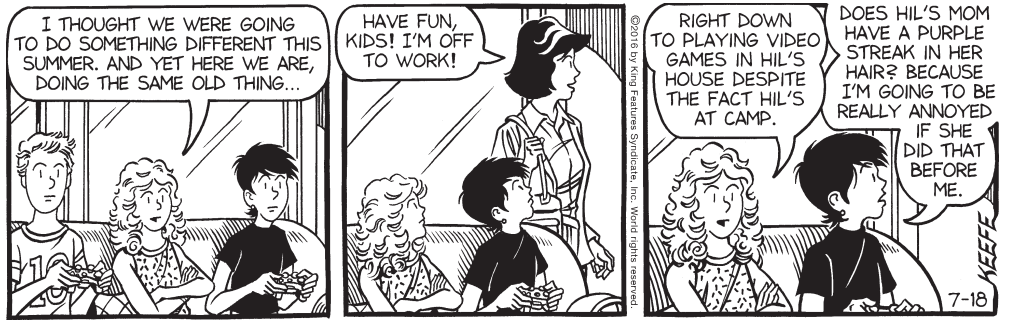
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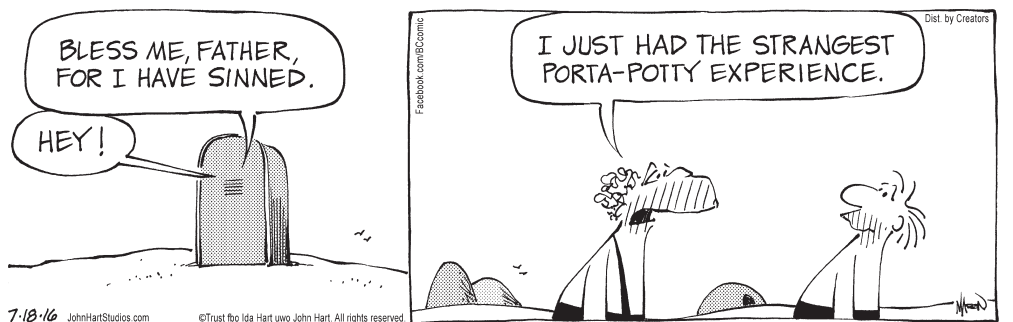
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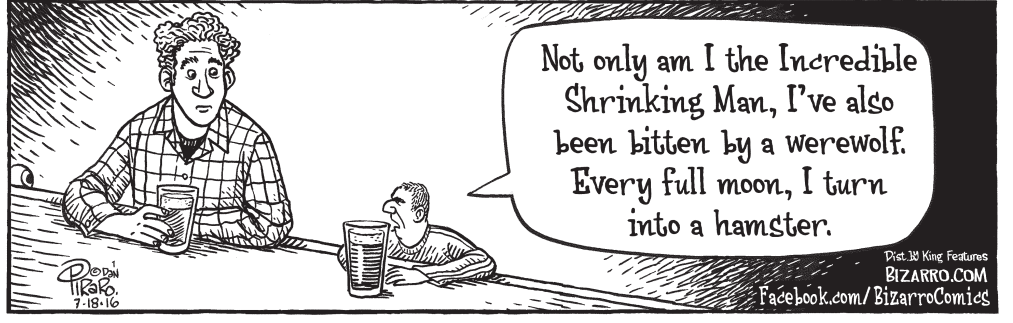
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