

# Girl has out-of-control diet

**Dear Annie:** One day a few months ago, my 15-year-old daughter got into the car after school with bloodshot eyes and red cheeks. I could tell she had been crying. I asked her what was wrong. At first, she said nothing. Then, with some gentle prying, she burst into tears and said, "Jason came up to me at lunch and said, 'Nancy, you would be really pretty if you lost some weight.'" As she relived the story, tears welled up in her eyes again. "Mom, I really want to lose weight. I am so tired of being picked last at gym because I can't run as fast as the other kids. Please help me."

My sister had just lost 30 pounds at a local diet center. I quickly went online and signed Nancy and myself up. Although I only had a few pounds to lose, I wanted to do the program with her so that we could make the necessary eating habit changes together. Our first meeting was at the same type of center. Nancy weighed in 25 pounds overweight. We learned tips for healthy eating and the importance of daily exercise. We heard women's success stories of losing over 100 pounds. When we got in the car, we were both excited to start losing weight.

We began writing down everything we ate in a food diary and

## Dear Annie



By **Annie Lane**

Creators Syndicate Inc.

would make all sorts of delicious veggie dishes we could snack on all day. Every evening, we would take our dog out for long walks for exercise. It was a great bonding experience.

Week after week, Nancy and I were losing weight. She was feeling more and more confident and even told me that Jason had asked her to go to a party with him. After about 12 weeks, she and I reached our goal weight and were instructed to begin the maintenance program.

I began to adjust my daily food intake for maintenance, but Nancy did not. At the next weigh-in, she had dropped another 3 pounds, which was below her healthy weight. When I told her that she could eat a little more, she became very defensive and said she was still heavy and overweight. I reminded her to look at the number on the scale.

During the following weeks, she was eating less and less. She said she was not losing fast enough. It was then that I noticed she had basically stopped eating. She would just move food around her plate. She now refused to go back to the diet center meetings. She was wasting away. I didn't know what to do. I took her to the pediatrician for a checkup. He told me that Nancy had the early signs of anorexia nervosa.

I was so upset. I felt as if the whole thing was my fault. I should never have taken her to the diet center. I should never have dieted alongside her. Did I contribute to this disorder?

—*Regretful Mother*

**Dear Regretful:** Jason sounds like a shallow jerk, and I'd discourage your daughter from spending any more time with him. But don't beat yourself up about what you might have done differently. You took action to try to help your daughter, which proves you care. That love and support is what's going to help get her better.

Ask your pediatrician for a recommendation of a therapist who works with girls suffering from body image problems. There are many great organizations that offer help. One of my favorites is The Renfrew Center, which can be reached at 800-RENFREW.

# Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** "Do you know what I mean?" they ask. You do, but that doesn't necessarily equate to agreement. The fact that they want validation from you says something. You've a strong presence now. They want your respect.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** What you did in the past is its own kind of ghost, haunting you at the oddest times. Just remember that ghosts, having no body, are illusory and able to distort themselves.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** Someone who took a road you didn't will give you a glimpse into your parallel life, and you'll gain insight as to what it might have been like to live, love or work in a different direction. You'll let this inform your next decision.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** There's something so great about doing it your way, even if the results themselves don't exactly turn out the way you intended (or even close). It's just interesting to know what the unadulterated, uncompromised version is.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** When everyone wants you to show up somewhere, it's a testament to your stellar company and their deep affection for you. It also has something to do with the way the financial end of these occasions is likely to shake out.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Sometimes you just have to bite the bullet and blurt out what's on your mind, but this is not one of those times. If you feel nervous and wordless on the subject, wait it out. Nothing needs to be said just yet.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Is "almost" ever enough? "Nearly there" isn't (SET ITAL) there, (END ITAL) to be sure, but it's not nowhere, either. Stand where you landed for a while

and consider your options. This valiant but failed effort isn't the last step you'll take.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Remember when you took the popular route and were sorely disappointed in the views? That's what's at your creative core today, driving your unusual and oh-so-satisfying choices.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Just as the bitterness of coffee makes the flavor so compelling, a harsh take on a situation that's gotten sickeningly sweet will provide intellectual and comedic interest today.

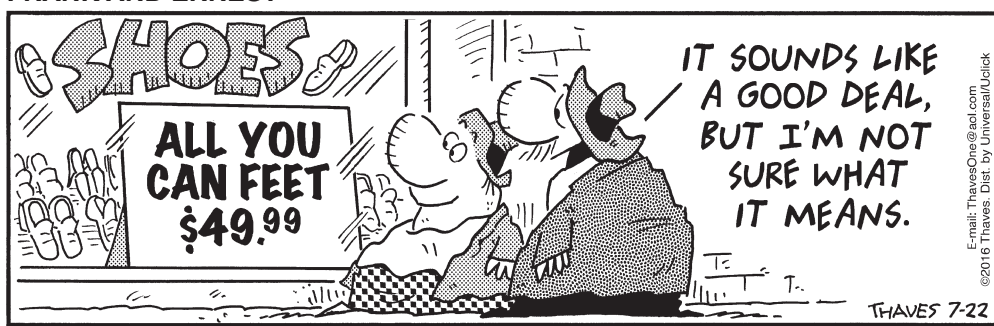
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** What flies for entertainment on a stage might be considered an overly bold and inappropriate response in real life. You're good at reading your "room," though, and will perform accordingly.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Growth is often associated with pain, but currently you are in a relatively pleasurable growth period. Sure, there are moments of uncertainty, and it's not the most comfortable process in the world... but it's not half bad, either.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Foiled? Go again. Never end the story with the hero (you) in a position that doesn't have the audience (you) cheering. Who's to say tomorrow's play won't be a game changer? Keep trying.

**SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (July 23).** Straightaway, your solar return inspires a decision that will shape all that follows. The experience you gain through the rapid-fire exercise of August will put you in a new position by September. January brings versatile partnership. It will be lucky to travel with this person or go into a short-term investment or business situation. Scorpio and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 35, 20, 16 and 45.

## FRANK AND ERNEST



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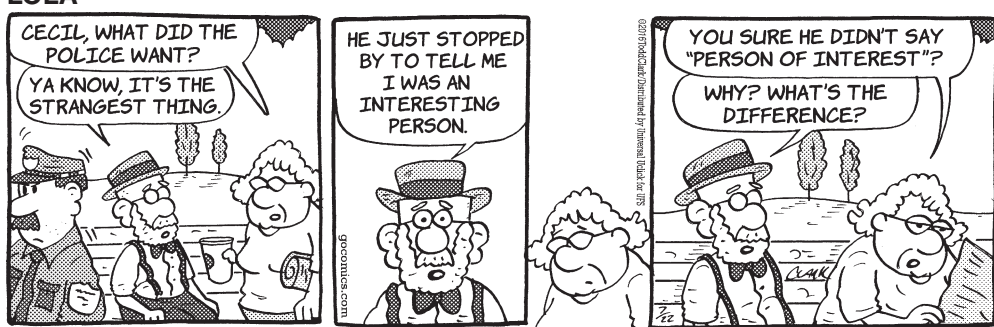
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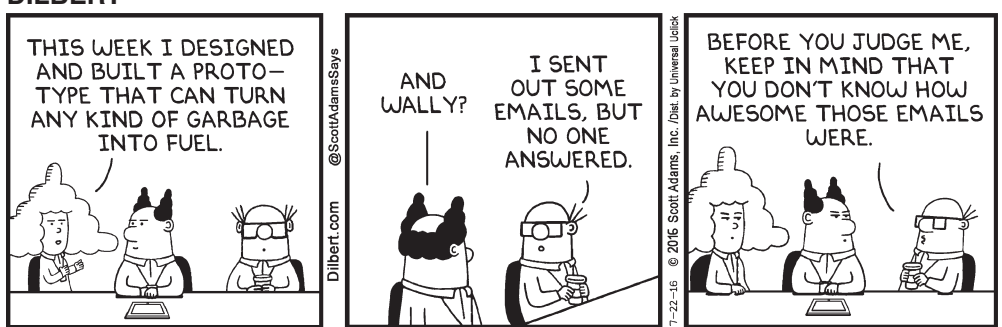
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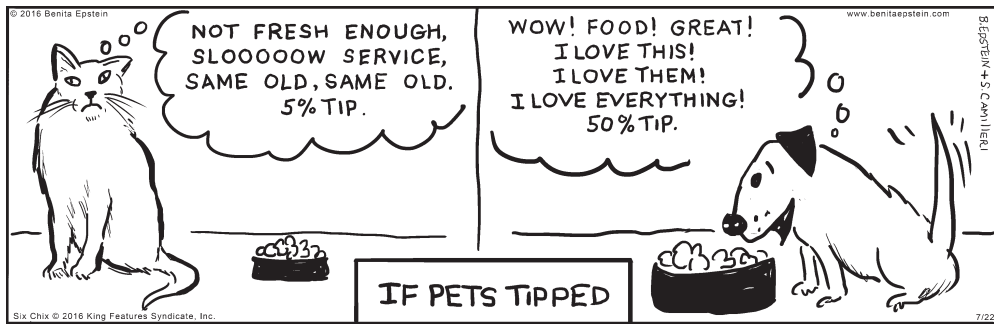
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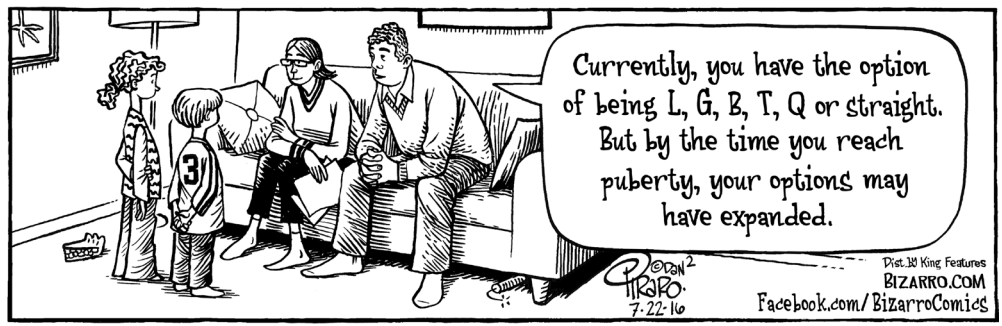
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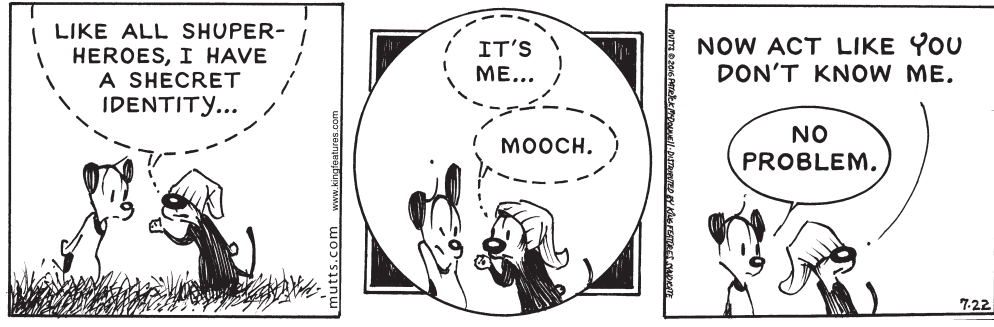
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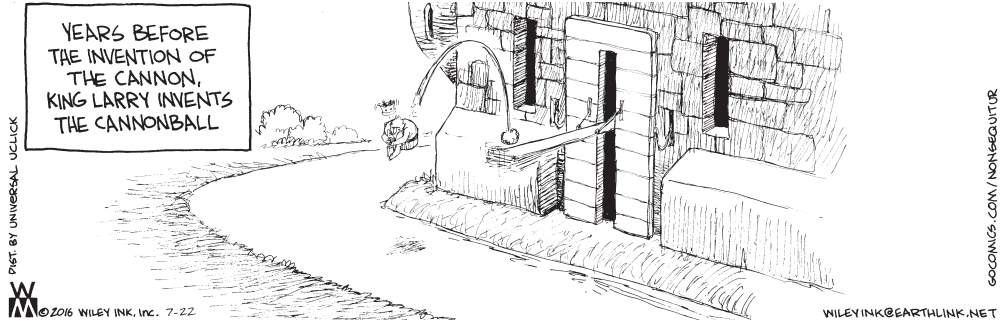
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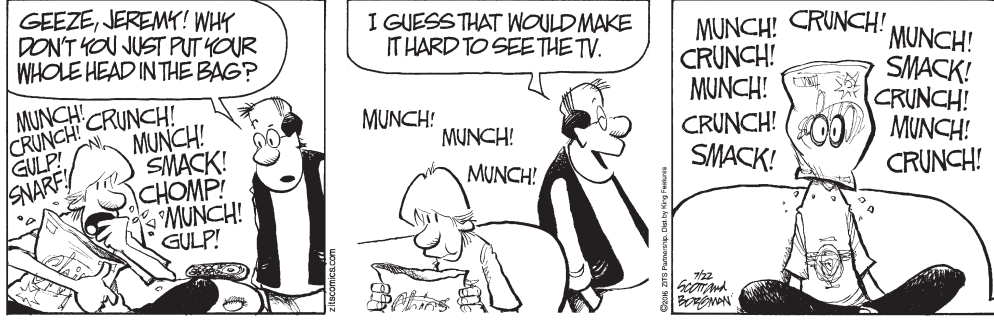
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## ROSE IS ROSE

