

Man needs to check out

Dear Annie: I have an embarrassing problem, and I don't know what to do.

I met a beautiful young woman who works in a local store. She is about 20 years younger than I am. She took my breath away the first time I saw her, but I figured that with the age difference, there was no chance.

I saw her every day for about 18 months, and every day I liked her more. One day, she told me she was depressed and needed to be cheered up. She also told me she was glad to see me because I always cheered her up. That was the nicest thing a woman has ever told me.

A couple of weeks later, I went into the store, and we locked eyes. She turned around without a word and went into the back room and didn't come out while I was there. Needless to say, that hurt.

For the next two weeks, she acted the same way, as if I were invisible. I was devastated. I stopped going in when she was working. I can take a hint.

Ten months later, she changed shifts, and I saw her again. It is a much longer story, but she acted as if I was her best friend again. That's when I realized I am in love with her. But with the age difference, I

Dear Annie



By Annie Lane

Creators Syndicate Inc.

know it's a no-brainer. Again I was devastated, even more so this time.

My question is this: Why is she so cruel? Is it a power thing? A tease?

My heart is broken again, and I guess I want to know why a woman would do that to someone who has always treated her with respect. It's so cruel. I'm lost here. Maybe I hurt her. But she won't talk about it, so I don't know. What should I do? — *Crush on the Clerk*

Dear Crush: I think you're shopping in the wrong aisle here. It's possible this girl is playing games with you, but the bottom line is that you will never know what is going on in another person's head. You can only control how you react.

So let's focus on your feelings here: I don't think you are in love with this girl; you are infatuated

with her. The best way to get over infatuation is to avoid the object of it. Change your routine; go to a different store.

I'd also recommend getting involved in a community organization so you can meet more people and build your self-esteem. You can't expect anyone else to respect you if you don't respect yourself.

Dear Annie: My girlfriend and I occasionally go to events during which "The Star-Spangled Banner" or a similar patriotic song is performed. The announcers always ask that people stand and please remove their caps. My girlfriend, "Marie," absolutely refuses to remove her hat. This is not for political reasons. Rather, she says removing a hat is only for guys. Fortunately, no one has expressed annoyance at her — at least no one other than me. Asking politely has no effect. What can I do? — *No-Hatter*

Dear No-Hatter: Neither of you is too far off base. The widely accepted etiquette is that men must remove their hats during the national anthem; women can leave fashion hats on but should remove unisex hats (such as baseball hats and beanies). So show her this column if you are in the right. And if you're wrong, you owe her some Cracker Jack.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You're so charismatic that people tend to do as you wish without even considering if it's best for them. Luckily, you're kindhearted and have their best interests in mind, so it is.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll agree to things you've never done before because you want the adventure and fresh stimulation of it. Since you've no worries about what the others think of you, you'll be comfortable in a wide variety of situations.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). There is a good reason to organize and catalogue your work. You're so close to it now that you may not even realize it, but you've built up a treasure trove of knowledge that others would love to know. You'll benefit from this soon.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). People around you may be overthinking the simple issues you so clearly see. Success in relationships will be a matter of bypassing the logical side of the other person's brain and communicating straight to the heart.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You'll approach your day with a sense of felicity, and all will pan out beautifully. The right words will reach the right ears. People will snap to your needs like perfectly matched puzzle pieces.

VRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your strength and confidence will give you an unfair advantage in relationships. Take it and leverage it while it lasts. When you're happy, the others will be happy, too.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Just because you've passed this way before doesn't mean that you're regressing. Like complicated crochet, some tasks require you to circle back and repeat past steps. The end result will be

neat, logical and lovely.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You would love to think that you're in control of the direction a relationship takes. First of all, total control is not possible. Secondly, if it were possible, it would be deadly boring. So relax!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Even if the task is lowly, doing it to your best ability and becoming great at it makes you powerful. Value power over status, effectiveness over popularity. This is spiritual strength.

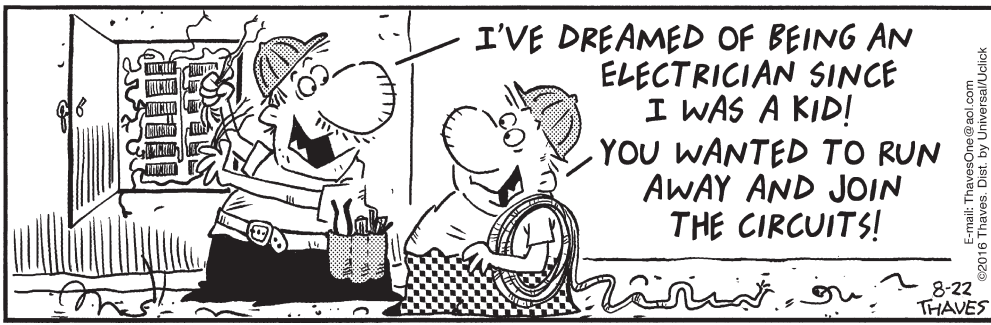
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You'll accomplish what you set out to do but not in the way you thought you would. A strange bit of magic will happen as you focus on your strengths and play to your talents.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll make a connection with someone you like immensely and also with someone you like a little less. Your true social genius is evident in the fact that neither will know which category he or she is in.

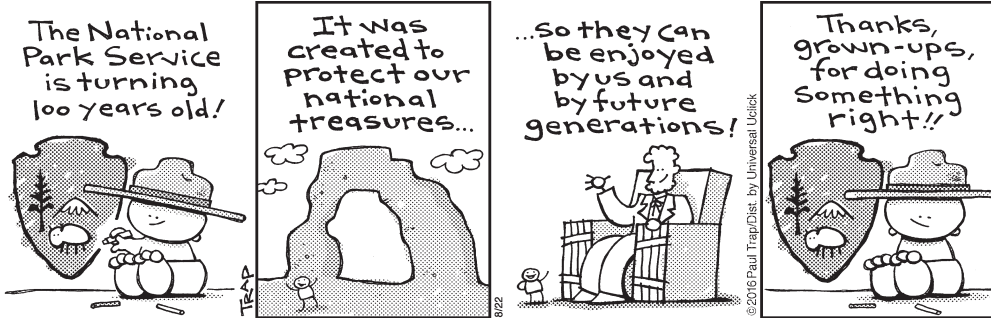
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You'll eloquently speak of your beliefs and dreams, entrancing your listeners and putting them in just the right headspace to agree with what you'd like them to do next. This is what happens when you speak from the heart.

TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Aug. 23). The risk you take in the next 10 weeks will be like jumping out of the nest: It's fly or fall time. Love will be your cushion. November sees you very creative. People will pay good money to have what you were primarily doing for yourself. Your relationship with these people will make the end of 2016 great. Aquarius and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 40, 28, 3 and 18.

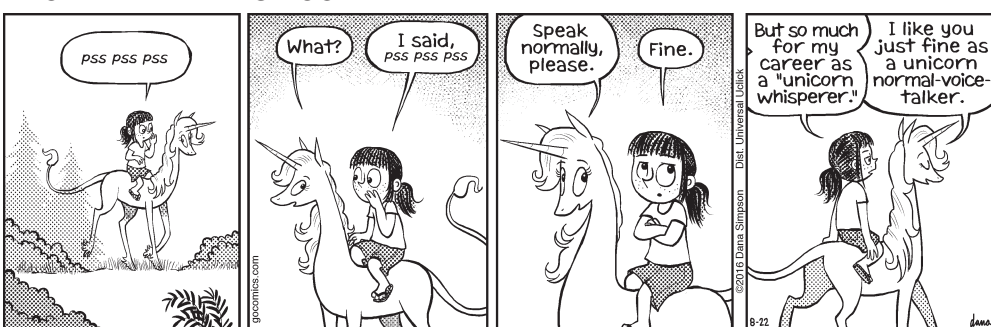
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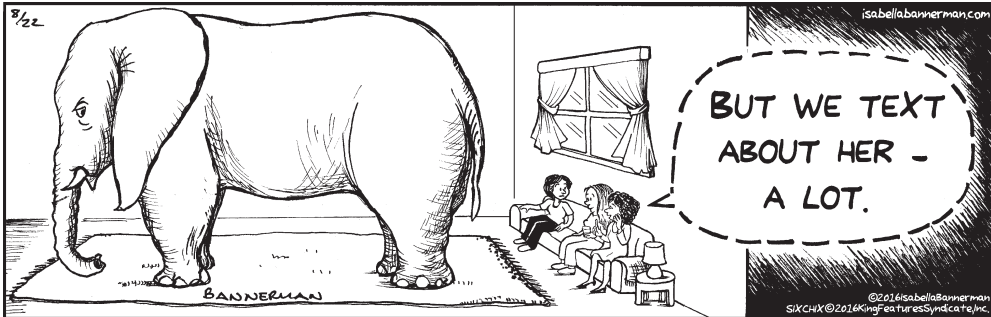
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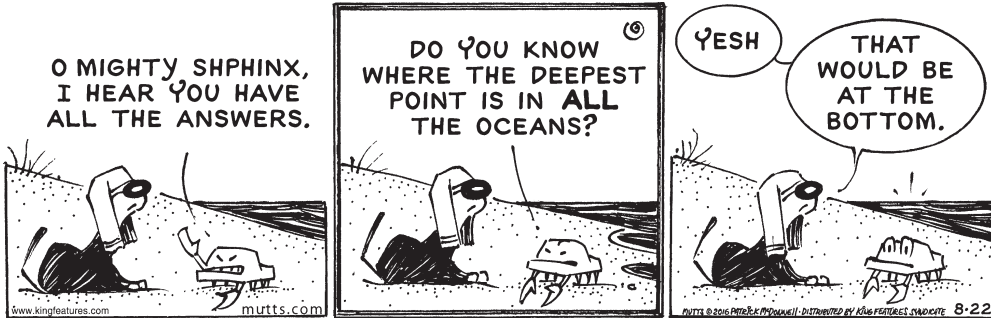
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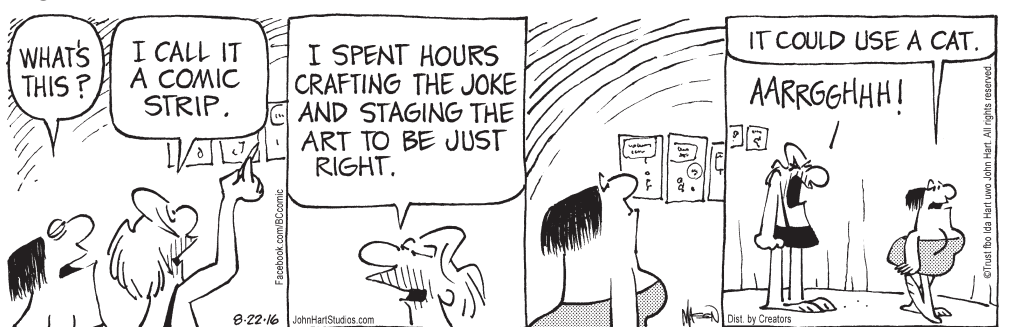
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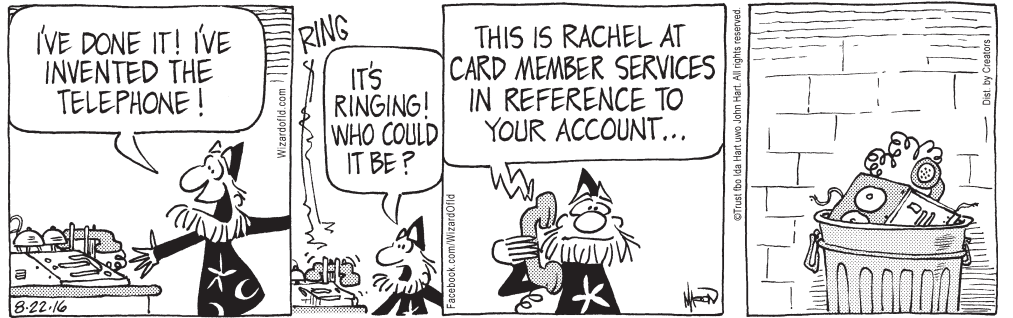
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