

Divorce after a long marriage

Dear Annie: I am a 70-year-old man with two adult sons. My wife and I divorced eight years ago after 30 years together. It was simply a case of two people having grown apart over the years and seeking different things in life. She had insisted that we move to the East Coast to be nearer to her family. I had no desire to either move cross-country to an uncertain future or live near her troubled family.

I always felt that because we have children, our relationship should be civil, if not amicable. But for some inexplicable reason, she has disparaged and defamed me to anyone who will listen, especially our kids. She cut off all contact with me and poisoned my younger son's mind with all manner of lies and distortions, such that he cut off all contact with me, too.

Curiously, my own mother did the exact same thing many years ago when she and my father divorced.

Annie, I have always believed that if you love your children, you should encourage them to have a good relationship with the other parent. So I am mystified by this kind of behavior. Can you explain it to me? — *Puzzled in Los Angeles*

Dear Puzzled: You're right that in a divorce, the best thing for the

Dear Annie



By
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children is for both parents to stay civil. But there are two sides to every story, and I would question whether your divorce really was simply a case of two people growing apart. Your wife may feel differently. Thirty years is a long time to have everything unravel so uncivilly. She may have been really hurt by you. Reflect on that.

Then talk to her. Perhaps you could bring up how your own mother did the same thing and explain how that negatively impacted you.

If she is flat-out irrational and uninterested in compromise, talk to your sons, but keep it simple and respectful. There's no need to defend yourself on every specific charge she is leveling against you. Just let them know that their mom may be saying some negative things

about you because she is hurting. Relate to them about what you went through with your own mother. Don't be vengeful, but don't let her push you out of your sons' lives, either.

Dear Annie: In response to your advice to the "Deserted Dad," who is worried about his marriage once the kids leave the nest, I would go a bit further with advice to act fast and make changes today. I was with my wife for 30 years, and I would describe our marriage basically the same way Deserted Dad did. Our kids were our life. More specifically, my life revolved around our kids. I see now why that was a bad idea.

Deserted Dad should waste no time in developing other interests to explore with his spouse. He should insist on it immediately.

At 48 years old, I now find myself searching for activities to do alone, feeling guilty every time I go out to try something new, knowing that there is no reason we couldn't have been doing these things together. It is a very serious turning point that Deserted Dad is facing — and one that thousands of others are probably facing, as well. Act now, before it's too late. — *Regretful Ex-Husband*

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Most changes don't happen overnight, and the larger ones can take especially long to unfold. When the change takes hold, it will seem like it happened all at once, but it will have been years in the making.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You are committing daily acts of self-sabotage. However minor the destructive habit may be, the numbers will work against you over time. This is a bigger deal than it seems. Make your life better: Cut it out now.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). A bitter person looks at the bad situation and says, "It always happens like this." A wise person decides to stop getting into the situations that tend to happen "like this."

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Chaos is inherently dangerous. The accompanying thrill is addictive. Break your addiction to low-grade, daily chaos by accepting the part of yourself that's hiding behind this diversion.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). When people are brave enough to share their weird, uncensored thoughts with you, it's a major compliment. They trust you not to judge. They value your insight. They consider your love a safe haven, which it is.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You'll be reminded how you and the others in your group are united in a common purpose. The energetic bond that holds the group together may be invisible, but it's real, it's tangible, and it's growing stronger all of the time.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Let the others know your process. Tell them how you got to this point. Let them know what you gained and what it cost you. Your journey will educate, inform and help others. You'll also be better appreciated.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Even though you can be as constant as the tide, it's important that you exercise your right to be unpredictable, as that's exciting for all. Bonus: This will keep your loved ones from taking you for granted.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). As it is in the fairytales, your wishes are magic seeds. Unlike the fairytales, they are not limited to three. So don't worry so much about wishing the right wish. Just plant them — preferably close by, so you can watch them grow!

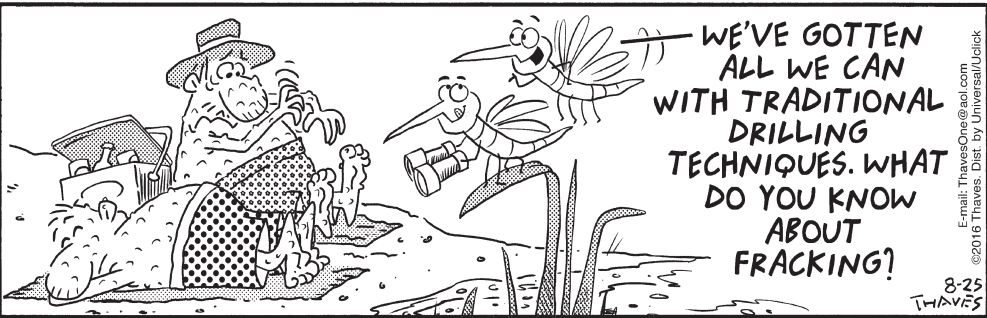
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). No matter what you choose, there are some people your choice will displease. Don't waste time defending your choices. As long as you do right by your own code, good will come of it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You've been so focused on taking care of others that you've neglected your main responsibility in life — which is, of course, taking care of yourself. Do what makes your heart and body feel whole and happy.

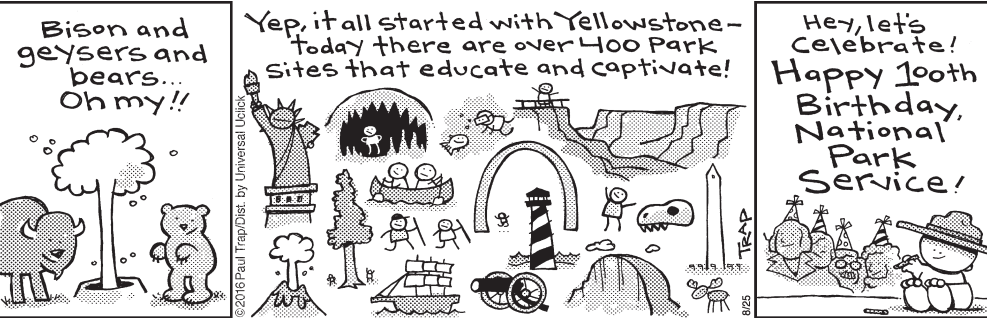
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Struggling for your next dollar is not your favorite way to spend the hours. On the other hand, you love to spend time and energy on a cause that helps others, and if you happen to make money in the process, life is good.

FRIDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Aug. 26). In the past you've felt you were doing what was necessary for survival, but this year is all about thriving. You'll live in lifted emotion and higher thought. Because of the love and support of your inner circle, a stimulating group of colleagues and a tranquil domestic environment, you can take chances and fly. Cancer and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 18, 22, 29 and 50.

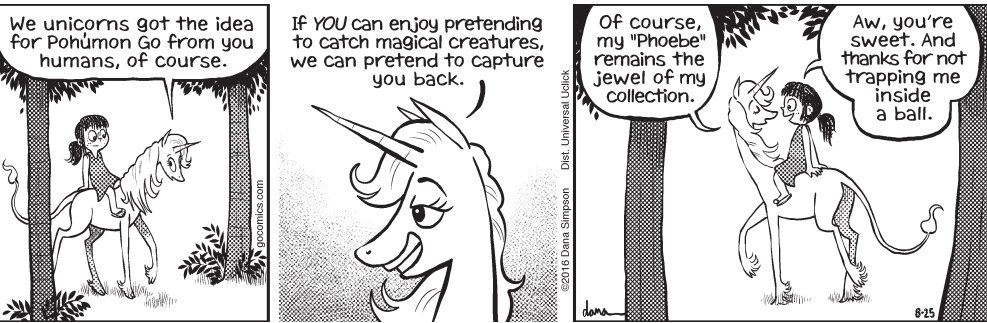
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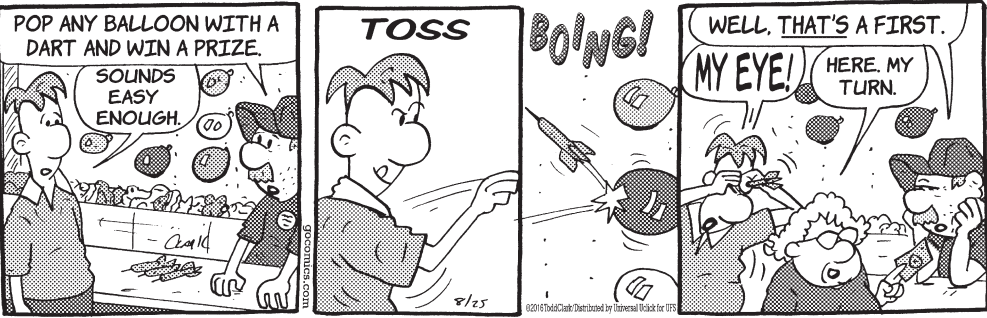
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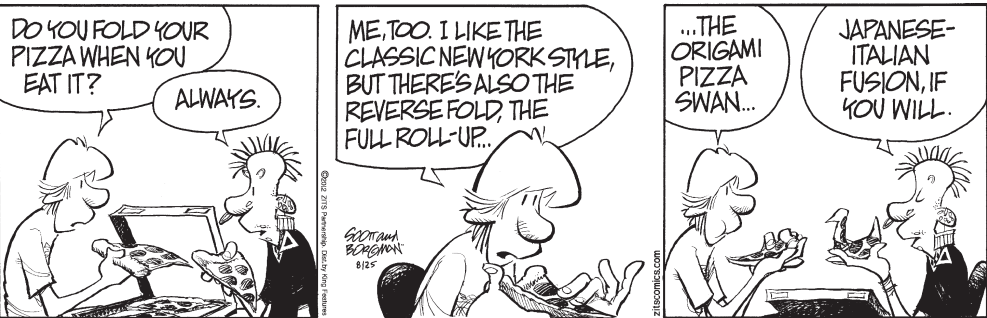
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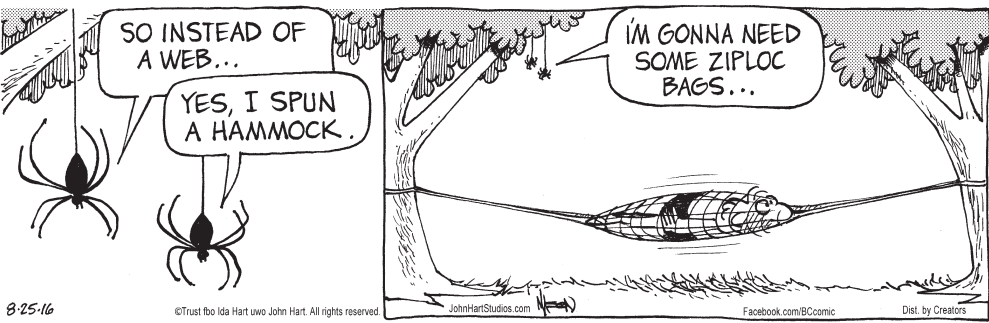
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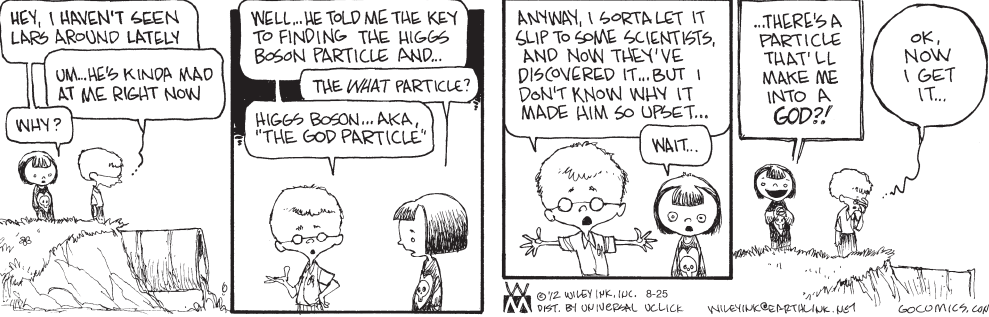
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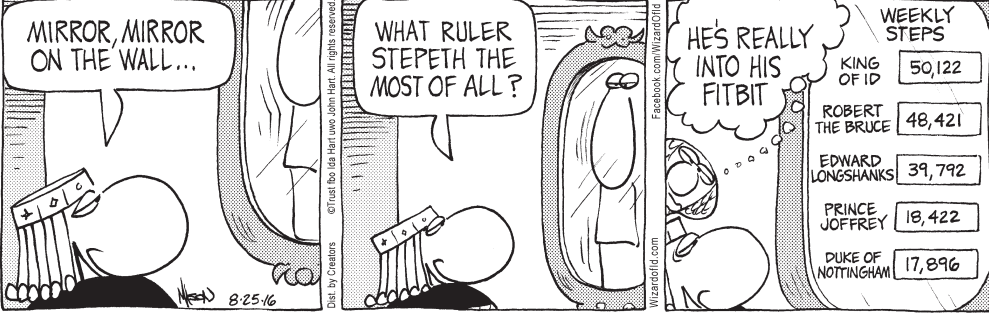
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