

Too busy to be a friend

Dear Annie: I have Type 2 diabetes, and I went through a near-death experience this summer — with kidney failure, congestive heart failure and other problems. I had to have surgery. While I recovered in the hospital, my son brought me my laptop. I posted my story on Facebook.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

While my other friends were offering messages of sympathy over my illness, my friend "Jill" was posting about an art show she was having. She paid no attention to my post. After a couple of weeks, I texted her husband, "Jack," and asked whether Jill had seen my post. I repeated my whole story. He said that Jill was too busy to talk, that she had an upcoming art show and their son was getting married. After another couple of weeks, I texted, "How was the wedding?" I found that the wedding was not for another two weeks. Yet Jill has not said anything about my brush with death.

I still have a tiny amount of fluid in my pericardium, and my left ventricle is still enlarged. What happened in June could recur, and next time, I might not be so lucky. I recently read that when we are

handed bad news that is too much for us to handle, our minds settle on lesser problems that we can focus our grief and anger on. This made a lot of sense to me. I cannot wrap my head around dying, so I can be angry with my self-absorbed friends.

But what should I do? Jill was a good friend. She may have a chip on her shoulder about having flunked grad school while some of us went on to have exciting tech jobs. She found her niche later in life, maybe in her 50s, and has fallen into a habit of dismissing those of us who are retired. — *Miffed*

Dear Miffed: Yes, you're probably focusing so much on Jill because it's easier to be angry at something tangible. You hit that square on the head. Then you went right back to resenting her.

You need to break this cycle of blame and judgment — not for Jill's sake but for your own. When recovering from surgery and battling chronic illness, attitude is everything. Start a gratitude journal, and list 10 things you're grateful for every morning. Spend time with friends and family who make

you feel loved.

Jill may come around eventually and apologize for not being there. She may not. Your mood can't depend on it. Forgive her in your heart and free yourself to experience more joy. I wish you good health.

Dear Annie: A woman wrote to you asking for advice on how to deal with a husband who rarely showers or changes his clothes. You recommended that the wife (or a doctor) provide information that might get the husband to change his ways. You missed the mark. The wife needs to take an active approach.

With men (in general), actions speak much louder than words. Assuming that he does not sleep in his clothes, the wife needs to gather up his clothes once he has taken them off and put them in the wash. He will have no choice but to wear clean clothes every day. Further, she should decline to be intimate with him unless he has showered that day. Finally, if their house layout allows, she should sleep in another room. If she takes those three steps, she will both improve the quality of her life immediately and, I suspect, change his showering frequency in very short order.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You'll be presented with the possibility of a different kind of working arrangement. Keep an open mind, because at first this may not sound like what you had in mind. This one is (so) worth a try!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Now they say, "I can't believe you went there." The truth is that you've always been "there"; it's just that now you're no longer willing to keep it to yourself. It will feel good to express your true thoughts.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Opposing forces can provide interesting tension, or they can pull so hard they tear things asunder. Why risk it? Avoid getting caught in the middle of a contest of strong wills.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Don't assume the people around you are on the same page. Future hassle can be avoided by explaining things better than you think you should have to. While you're at it, ask questions to make sure they're really catching on.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Be careful not to get so caught up in the minutiae of practical concerns that you ignore the feelings that are really driving this scene. There's more to gain by tuning into the emotional world of others.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Even those who love you very much may not understand you as well as you like. Relationships can be like fun-house mirrors that reflect back a warped and distorted version of you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). There will be a reward for impressing that certain so-and-so. No need to posture, perform or stretch the truth in the least. Nothing is more interesting than the real deal.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Laziness can lead to inventing an easier way. Anger can motivate change. Fear can promote safety; sadness can inspire bonding; restlessness is the precursor to adventure. Whatever you're feeling, there's a benefit to it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Sometimes the kindest thing isn't the nicest thing. Besides, maybe you're better suited to do the thing that challenges people, makes them think or makes them laugh.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). How do you get to the root of a problem? You dig. Expect resistance, but don't let it deter you. The hard ground can be cracked with more substantial tools.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The right thing to do might not be readily apparent, but that's what the wise one is for. Use this person. If you can't find this person, use the internet. You should be able to come up with a solution by sundown.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The fair price for goods or services isn't always the price being offered. There are long-reaching benefits to paying what's fair, even if it means giving more than is being asked of your wallet.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 9). You'll do your best work when the pressure is on; in fact, you could even earn a prestigious award for it. Your dealings with a foreigner could inspire you to travel. March, April and October are your prime months for financial opportunity. Love is your weakness in February, your strength in May. Leo and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 26, 45, 31, 28 and 15.

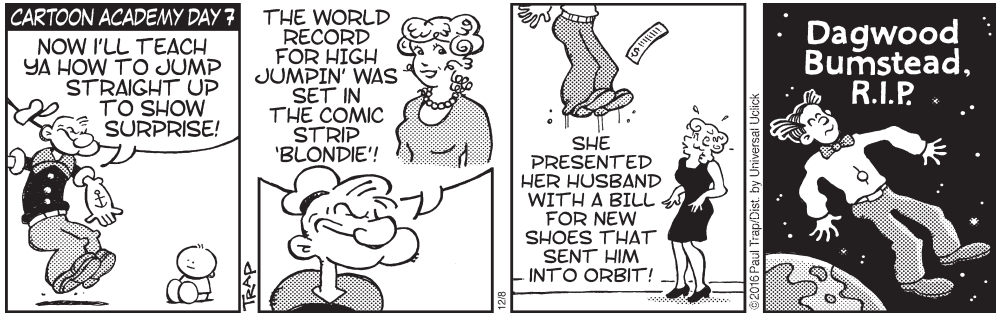
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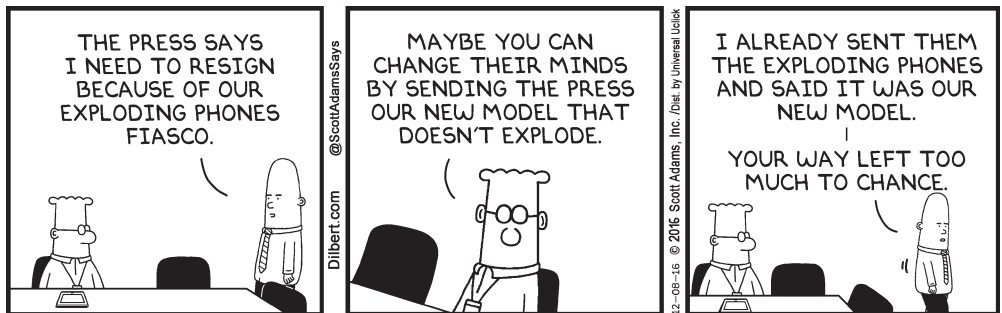
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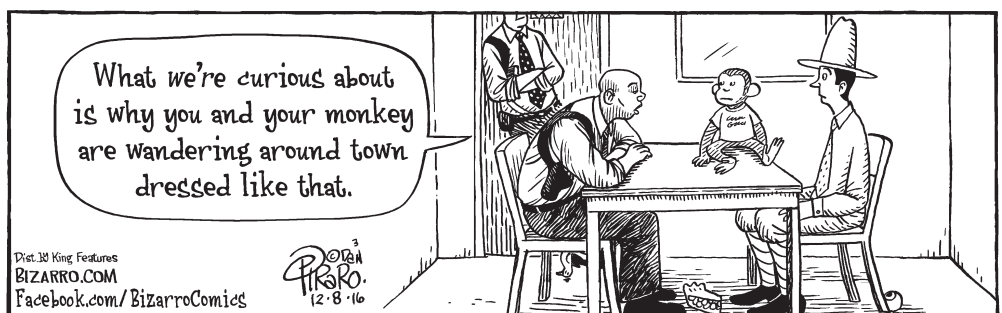
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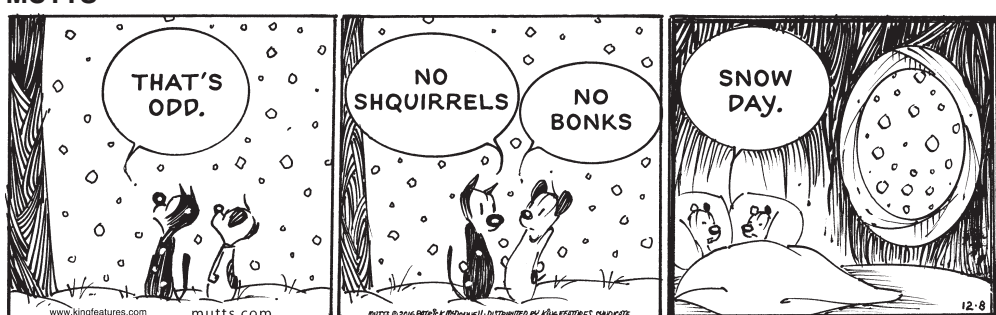
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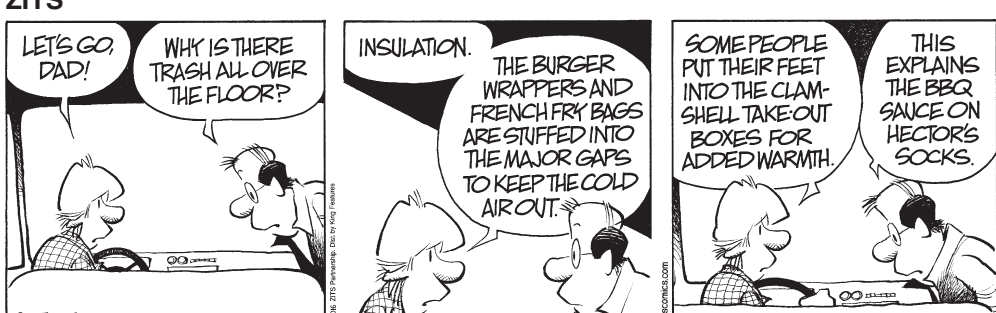
BABY BLUES



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