

Failing in the real world

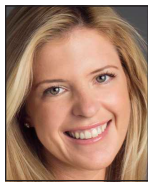
Dear Annie: I recently graduated from college with a degree in journalism. I interviewed with several media companies in New York and landed my dream job at a major online magazine. I was thrilled.

Everything went smoothly the first month. It was the second month when things fell apart. We had a companywide meeting, and I was supposed to give a presentation about a project I was working on to drive more traffic to the site. Well, I got the days totally mixed up. I thought the meeting was Wednesday, when in fact it was Tuesday. My boss came to my cube first thing Tuesday morning and said, "We can't wait to hear your presentation." That's about when my heart stopped. I froze in my tracks. I was planning on finishing the bulk of the presentation that evening, and now I had only a half-hour to throw stuff together.

I walked into the boardroom completely unprepared. I started off trying to wing it, but after about 30 seconds, I clammed up completely. My face was burning hot. I mumbled, "I got the days

wrong," and then I awkwardly took my seat. And as I sat down, I spilled coffee all over myself. I left the meeting feeling embarrassed and like a failure. My supervisor talked to me about it afterward and was pretty understanding but said not to let it happen again. Now I'm afraid every day there is going to be my last.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Dear Disappointment: There's no use crying over spilled coffee. All people with an office job can name a time when they wanted to shrink to the size of a paper clip and hide in the desk drawer. But mistakes are proof that you are trying, and you can't learn without making a few (or a hundred). Your colleagues don't expect perfection, especially because you're just out of college. What they do expect is consistent hard work and a positive attitude. So get back at it and show them that. Use your mortification as motivation. And I think this goes without saying, but never wait until the night before a presentation to prepare.

Dear Annie: I've always

been curious as to why you and most other advice columnists always take the position that family is sacred just because it's family — that people should bend over backward to maintain family relationships, no matter how dysfunctional.

My husband and I are retired, and at 70, we are still blessed with good health and are financially secure enough to truly savor our golden years. We do this by always collaborating over big decisions and eliminating toxic influences from our happy life — including relatives.

We do not bail out children who get in trouble because they didn't follow our advice. We love to share our coastal Florida home with friends and family who truly cherish us, but we politely decline requests from freeloaders who obviously care about nothing but our pool and its proximity to the beach. And as for those who go on social media to attack our political views? We ask them to please not contact us anymore.

You would be amazed how freeing and uplifting this is. Life is just too short — especially at this age — to be governed by guilt or a false sense of duty. — Living Free

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). What could be better than a satisfying reversal? The bit of poetic justice you witness today will give you a very specific kind of joy to revel in. Part of this may be an appointment or allowance you've been waiting for.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Today's cosmic gift is a surprise happening that you suspect only you would totally love; this is the stuff of life that sends you floating on a felicitous mood far into the night.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). To really connect with people is more than a talent for you these days; it's beginning to feel like a responsibility. At least it's one you'll be rewarded for in many different ways.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're the one with the ideas. The others think that you get the fun part, but you know the weight of this job. If it doesn't turn out well, the blame is passed your way. Still, you're good at this, so you're willing to take the risk.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You'll be the communicator for your crew, not because you understand any better than they do, not because you have inside information, not because you have experience: only because you're the best communicator.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). How can you elevate this simple, tedious job before you to the level of art? The answer is, maybe you can't. But keep adjusting your attitude incrementally upward and you may get it into the zone of "craft."

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). It's one thing to complete the task, quite another to commit the completion into a system. The current one is either not as good as it could be, or non-existent.

You won't regret the hours you put into this.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Yours is not one kind-of-affection-fits-all situation. Each of your friendships is different from the rest. You don't decide how you're going to love; the friendship dictates it. You just show up, ready to give.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). One way is to imagine yourself getting to the goal and run this movie in your head again and again. Whether or not it works, it will teach you about yourself and your relationship to this aim.

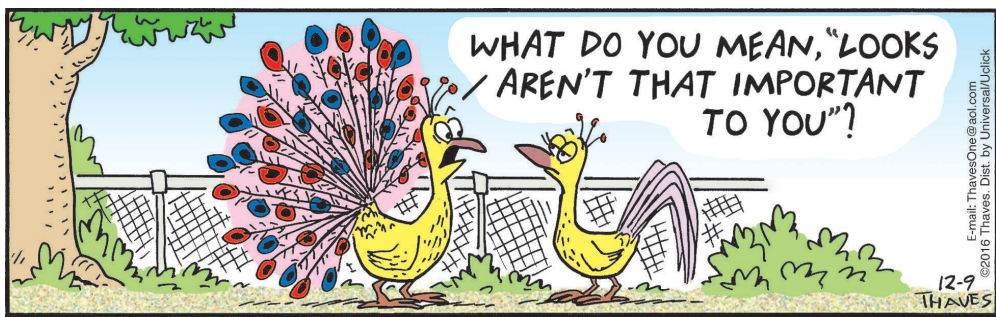
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Brilliant minds like Albert Einstein and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe agreed on this one thing: Poets go first; scientists catch up later. Do not discount your nonsensical imaginings. They just might become your future.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll learn what you need to know and what you don't need to know. Best of all, you'll learn how to tell the difference between the two so the fruits of this study will be both knowledge and wisdom.

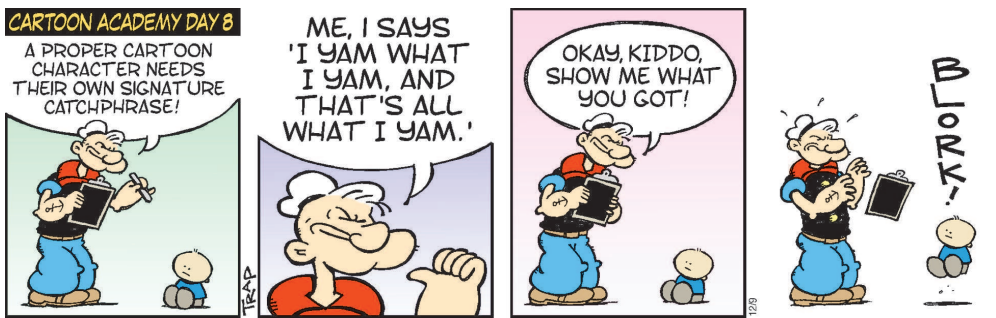
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your fascination with someone gives you a window into a different world. At some point you may even become more fascinated with that world than with your original introduction to it.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 10). Friendships give you enormous gifts this year. You may even be surprised at the fullness of attention, the accolades and the deep affection coming your way. February opens a new avenue of work or fascination. May and June are your prime opportunities to expand your influence. You'll be appointed in August. Libra and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 40, 24, 10 and 28.

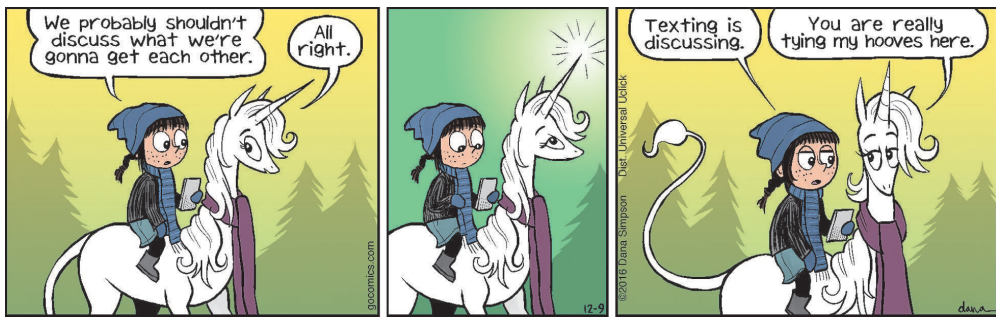
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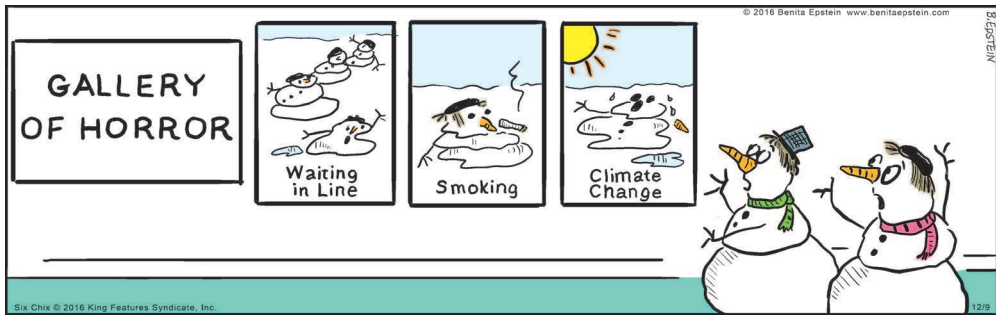
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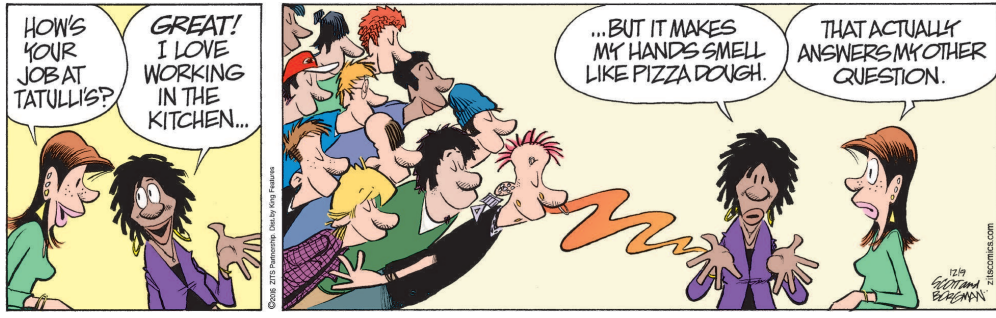
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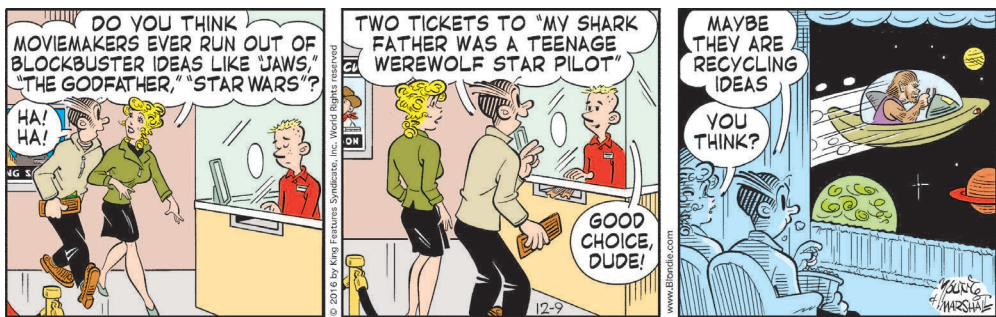
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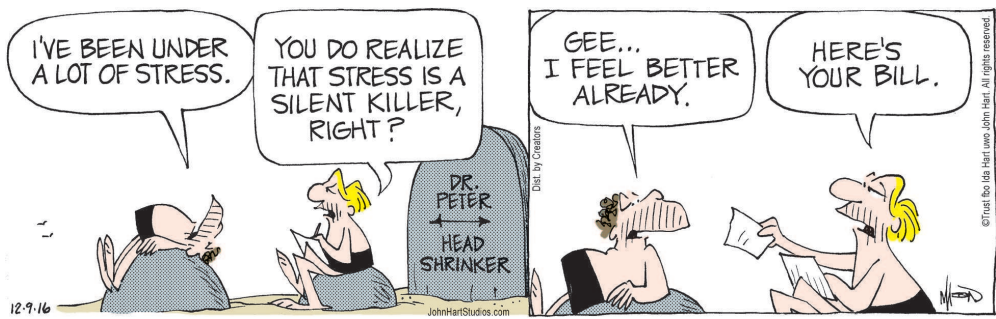
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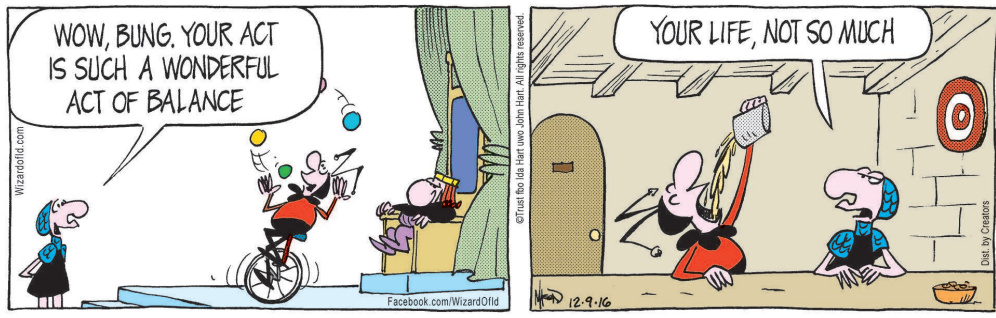
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