

Daughter takes precedence

Dear Annie: What is wrong with me? I truly don't know what to do. I have a boyfriend of five years, and for five years, I have watched him pursue his daughter daily.

He texts her several times daily. He knows where she is every minute, whom she is with and what her plans are. He would drive 45 minutes to walk her dogs for her because she is working. He knows all her friends and stays in touch with them, too. He seeks them out if he goes back to where they used to live.

She was living with him when he and I met, but a year later, she got a place of her own. However, several times since, she has moved in and out of his place. He always wants to save a place for her in church, and when she overslept and didn't make it one time, he spent the entire service craning his neck looking for her. Their goodbyes resemble those said by people who may never see each other again.

Annie, this man and I are in our 70s. His daughter, who has

never married, is 50. He and his ex-wife have been divorced for five years. He and his daughter are very secretive about their conversations, and I have no place in their life as a third wheel.

He still works a full-time job in a very demanding position, but if he doesn't see her at least once a week, he has withdrawals. I am so mad about it that I refuse to marry him. I have talked to him about this till I am blue in the face, and he knows why I won't marry him, as she will always come first. He just says, "She's my daughter."

I really don't love him anymore, as I don't see any future knowing he will drop everything to rush to her side for any reason. But walking out again is stressing me out, too. Any advice? — *Third Wheel*

Dear Third Wheel: Your boyfriend is exhibiting signs of extreme codependency with his daughter. That kind of toxicity can't be contained to just one area of his life. It spills into all others, including his relationship with you. Therapy might help

him change. But he doesn't seem to want to.

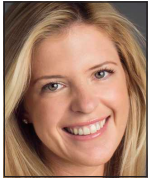
You deserve much better, and I think you know it. You would be happier on your own than witnessing this man obsessively try to control his daughter for the rest of his life. You are not a third wheel; you are a valuable and important human being. Anyone who makes you feel lesser doesn't deserve your time.

Dear Annie: This is a response to the letter from "Sudden Loss for Words in TN," who asked about the best response to a suicide. My family has been through that situation.

The worst thing for the family are insensitive questions, spoken or implied. For example, "Why?" "Didn't you know?" "Why didn't you do something?" You never know the depth of someone's inner pain and struggle, because it's not obvious.

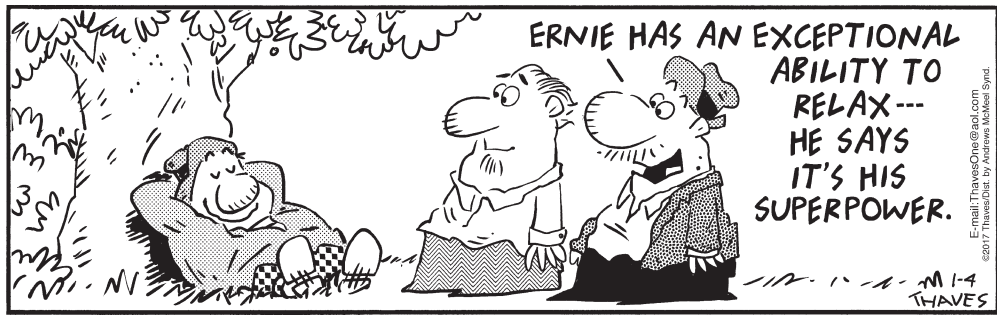
The best thing is to remember something good about the person: "I remember when he and I..." "I remember when he..." That person had a life, even though it ended so unexpectedly. But the important thing is that he lived, not how he died. — *Been There*

DEAR ANNIE

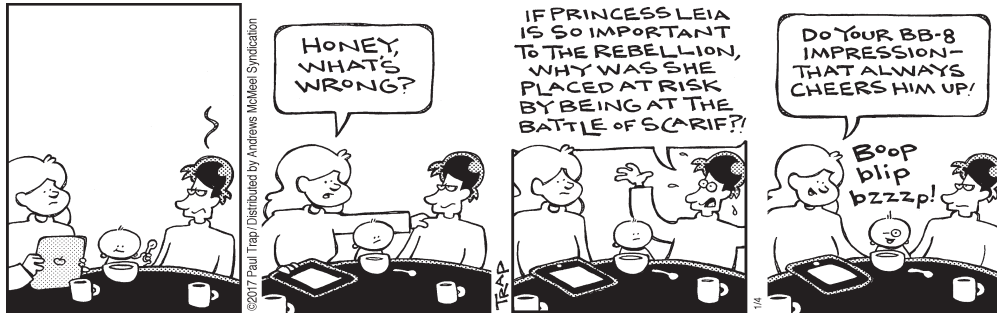


Annie Lane
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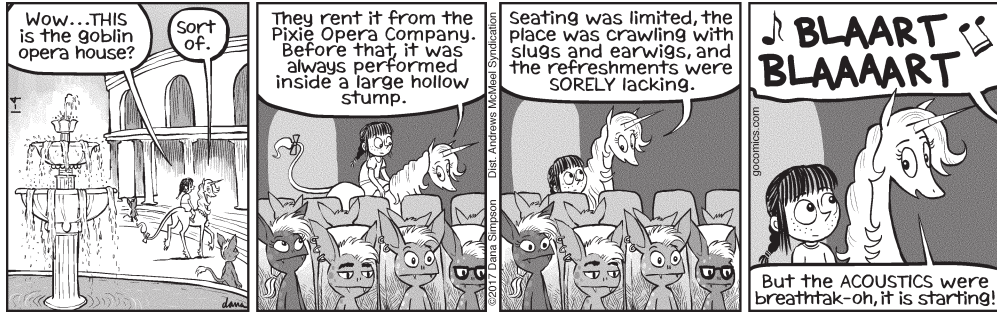
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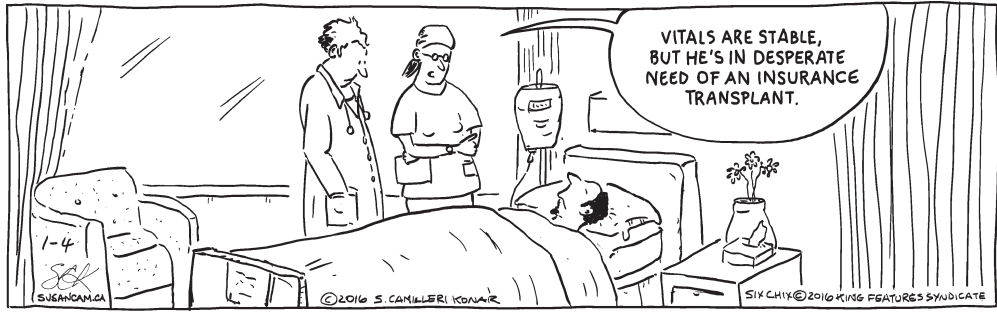
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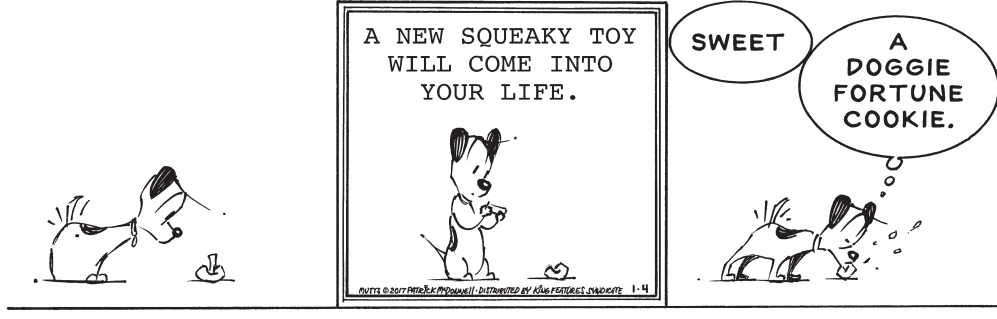
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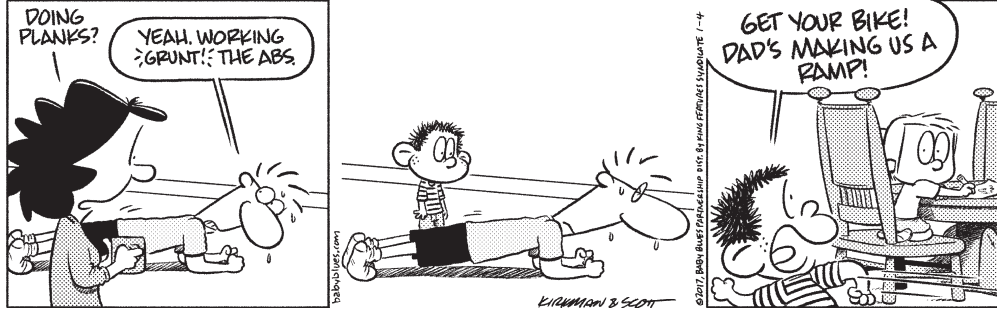
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TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Some experience commitment as the loss of options, and certainly that's part of it. But sacrificing an endless array of options for something narrow and concentrated, oddly, will only make your life and options larger.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Walking, running, flying — it's essentially the same principle. To move forward requires strength, balance and constant adjustment. Be honest, feel where the weakness is, and adjust to correct yourself.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). What's important is sometimes quite dull. You already know every cobble of the road you're on today, but there is a magnificent reason for traversing it over and over. In a way, this is heroism.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Don't hesitate, vacillate, agonize or dwell. Make quick work of it and get on with something decadent, like treating yourself to something sweet or delightful or intoxicating. Bonus points for doing it without guilt!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You're fanciful and imaginative. You can paint a vivid picture for others with your words and the way you say them. Use this to your advantage. The right subject matter is key.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Alas, childhood's limitless possibility must come to an end at some point. And yet today, a youthful opportunity you thought was closed to you forever will open up once more.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're not trying to juggle three or four different balls in the air at once. That's for amateurs! You've 10 to 20 that need to stay afloat. If a few drop, don't even give it a second thought. Just keep moving.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You'll be a kind of champion today, although a quiet one. The fact that you don't want to be noticed and lauded for your efforts makes them all the more valiant.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There are times you want to be your most attractive self, but not always. Invisibility has its benefits. You need time to yourself. Play it low-key and you'll slip happily under the radar for a spell of much-needed solitude.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The insecure and impressionable people around you need someone to mentor and protect them. You're the natural fit. With what you know and who you are, you will teach and inspire.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your joy won't be found in the world of glamour and thrills today. The less conventionally exciting a labor appears to be, the greater its potential as an arena for doing meaningful, fulfilling work in the world.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're ready to speak, but are they ready to listen? Prime them for it first: Grab their attention; then give them a moment to settle into the reality that you're about to say something important. Finally, deliver from the heart. Score!

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 5). Given the choice between being somebody and doing something, you'll choose the latter. Accolades are nice, but they feel hollow in comparison to the high you get from mastering the task, killing the mission, being in flow. You'll deepen your commitment to your life's work and loves for your most successful year yet. Leo and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 3, 20, 5, 14 and 18.

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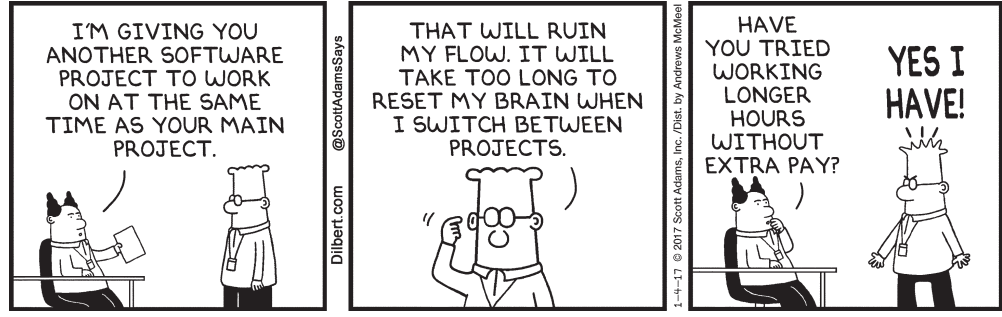
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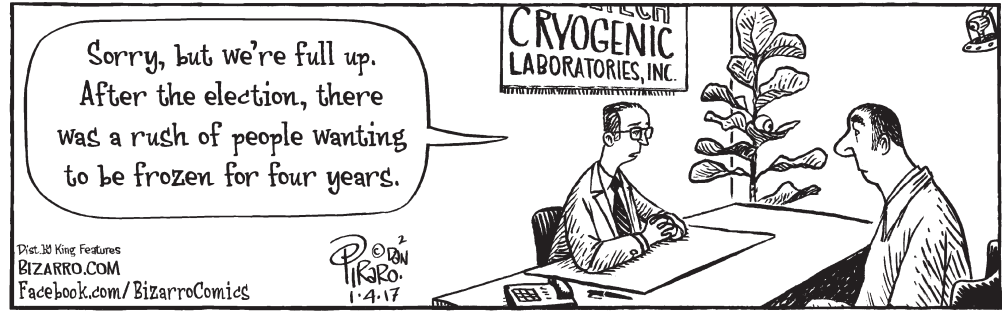
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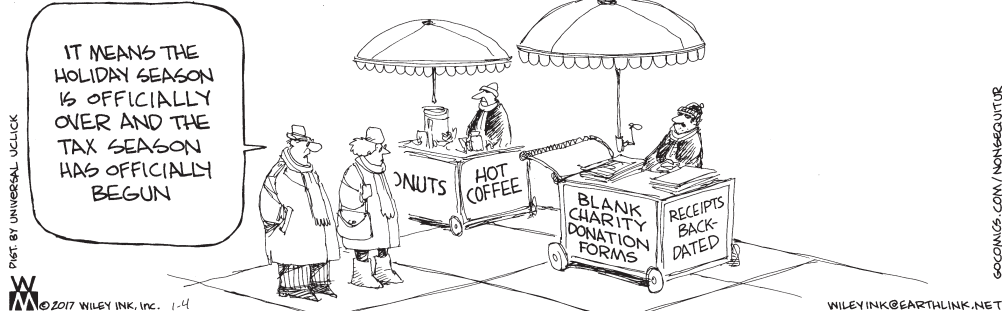
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