

Overwhelmed by emails

Dear Annie: As of this writing, I have 6,972 unread emails.

A lot of them are promotions from stores I shopped at once. Some are from social media sites, telling me I have notifications — Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest — which I hardly ever check.

I guess I never got into the habit of deleting these messages as they came in, and then once the pile started growing, it just seemed so overwhelming that I gave up even trying. I wish I could just delete everything and start fresh, get my inbox back down to zero.

In some cases, I have emails from people I would like to talk to. For instance, my cousin, whom I haven't talked to in over a year, emailed me last month. I've kept putting it off until I have enough time to sit down and write a thoughtful response. Now it's been so long I feel awkward about replying.

I have a similar problem with voicemail. I delay checking my messages, and sometimes I just ignore them altogether.

After I click "send" on this email to you, I'm going to have anxiety

about seeing your response. What is wrong with me? I feel paralyzed. How can I begin to tackle this? — *Inbox Infinity*

Dear Inbox: Procrastination and anxiety are each other's best cheerleader. Anxiety encourages procrastination, and vice versa. Remove one of them and you'll deflate the other.

So start by calming down. Tell yourself, "Nothing catastrophic is going to happen because I didn't delete emails." Although such a laissez-faire attitude might seem counterproductive, it's a lot easier to get moving once you take that enormous weight off your shoulders.

Then snap to it and get that inbox under control, first by plugging the dam so you can prevent floods of promotional emails in the future. Open the latest email you received, and scroll to the bottom. Look for the "unsubscribe" button (in microscopic font). Do that for every major vendor that's flooding your inbox.

Next, delete with abandon. Trash every promotional email that's more than a week old. Resist the urge to save emails "just in case." If

you were really interested in reading last week's Pinterest newsletter, you already would have.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Miffed," about her experience with a friend who was not there for her during a medical scare. I, too, had a friend who I thought would always be there for me — especially because I had been there for her through a lot of stuff. However, when my husband went in the hospital and was given a very upsetting diagnosis, she was not there. No phone call, no visit, nothing. Also, the day after he was released from the hospital, I turned 50 and his mother died. Again, nothing from this friend whom I had been so very close to.

It took me a while to get over the anger and hurt and to move on without her in my life. I put the anger and hurt in an imaginary box and nailed it shut and handed it over to the Lord. Once I did this, I was able to focus on the good things and the good people in my life who were there for me. I hope "Miffed" will move on and appreciate what her other friends and family members did and are doing and realize that this person is no longer of importance in her life. — *Over Being Miffed*

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The better your relationship is with another or with yourself, the less you require from your environment. An ordinary meal, a walk, a shopping trip — all opportunities for amazing romance and/or rapturous enjoyment of life.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Today feels like a jelly doughnut. The best stuff is in the center. You're right! To find a thing's center, bite into it. If it can't be bitten, dig. If it can't be dug, drill.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You've a particular set of curiosities that speak to your intelligence. What you're after might not be popular with everyone. If no one is lining up to see it, it's not any less interesting.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Finding the one you like best takes faith and devotion to a process. It's a lot harder than going with the one you got there first. And what if the first one turns out to be the best one after all? You'll never know unless you shop around.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Like the pop artist Sia, you feel you have something to say today, but you don't necessarily want to be recognized for saying it. In fact, you'd rather be left alone to do your thing. Therefore, you may use someone else as your mouthpiece.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Lose something? Chances are that it's very close to you; you're just not seeing it. What you need to do is clean up. To find what you can't see, strip away what you can.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). It's very easy to be the most charismatic person in the room these days. All you have to do is engage the world instead of looking at your cellphone. If it's worth doing, it's worth your full attention.

Socializing is definitely worth doing.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Eating something new buoys the spirit more than most new things, especially if that fresh flavor is exceptionally pleasing. Cook for your loved ones. Make memories.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The impact of environment on human behavior cannot be underestimated. Test the theory by changing yours up significantly. See if that doesn't change the way people behave in your home, particularly loved ones.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Everyone knows you're not supposed to stare into the sun and nor should you look directly at the super-watt lightbulb. Also, there's an art to looking on the bright side.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). It will feel as though your actions are questions instead of answers. If you knew it all, the day would be boring. You're willing to accept the uneasiness that comes with exploration.

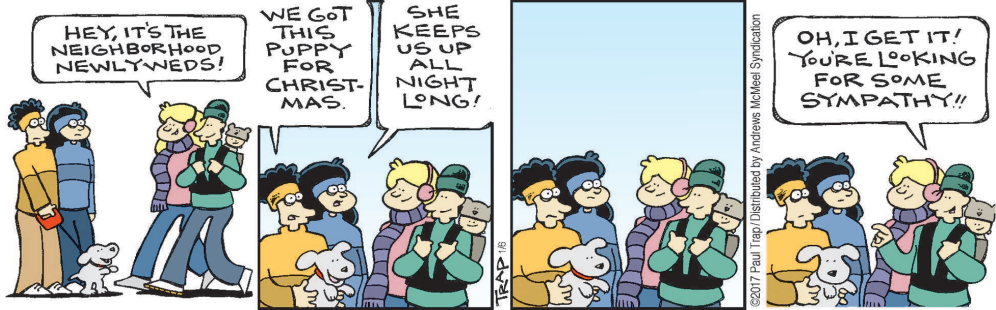
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). There are a lot of boxes you haven't checked. Good news: You don't have to, not now, not ever. You might later. Be OK with that. You're a kind person, and you give your all. That's enough for today.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 7). Military or not, you'll be a soldier in your life this year, willing to stand, fight, love and live for a principle. Your loyalty to a group or ideology will guide the action in the next four months. You'll see victory in May and July. You'll enjoy financial rewards with loved ones in March and August adventures. Gemini and Libra adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 2, 14, 39 and 27.

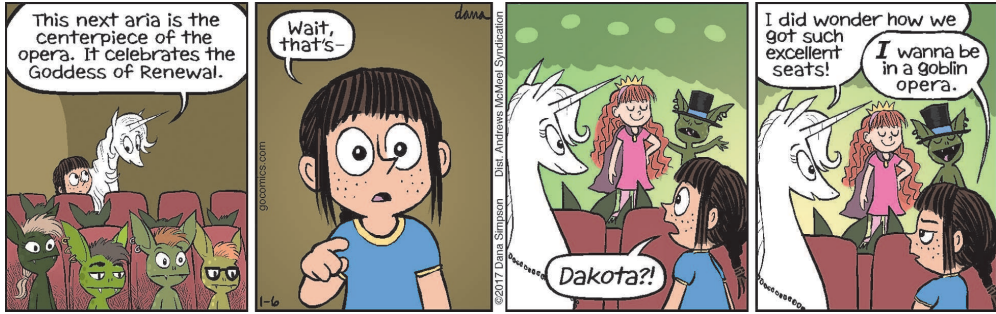
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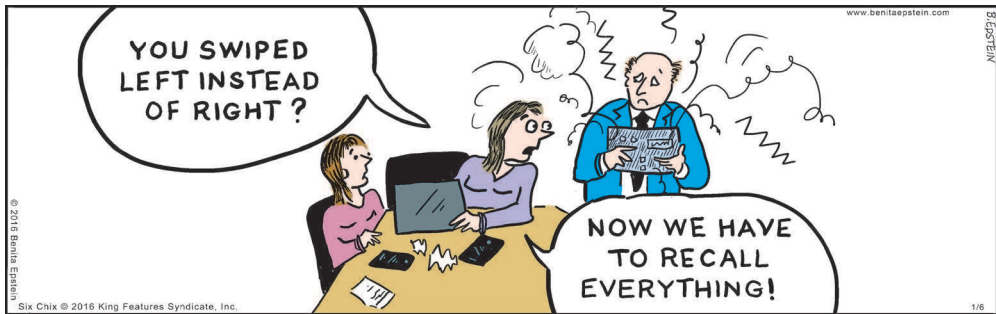
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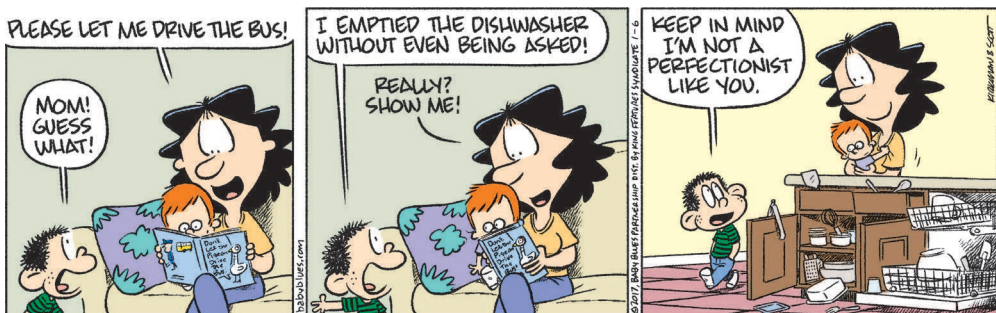
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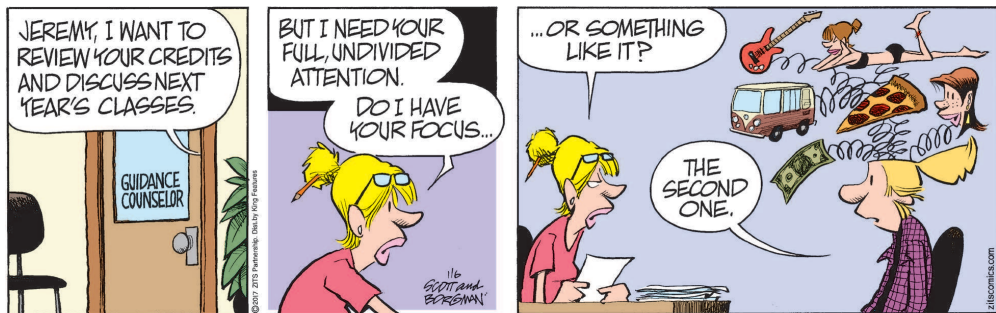
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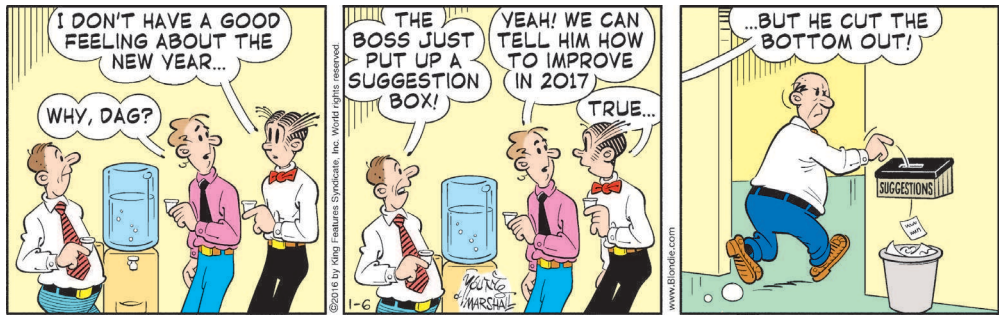
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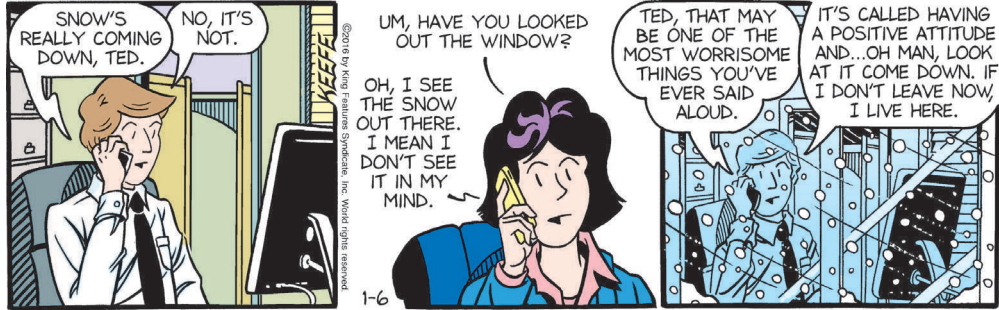
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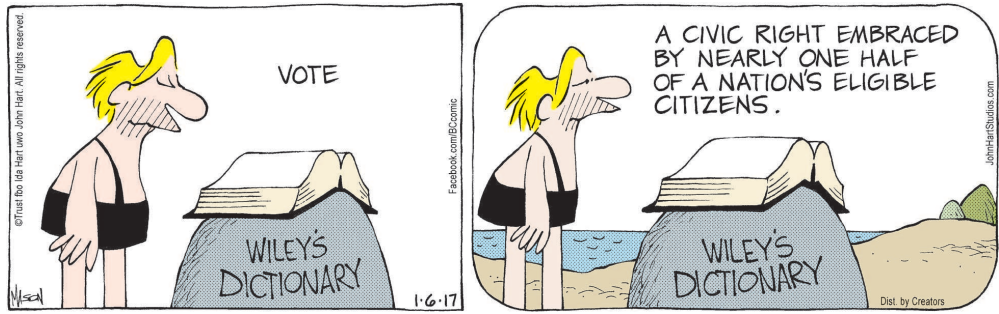
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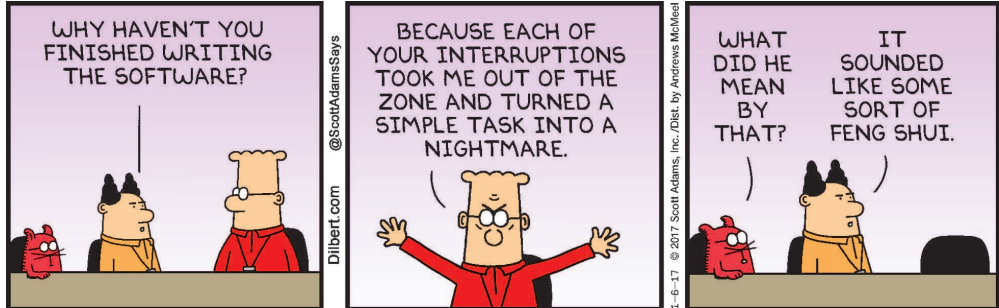
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