

Am I being naive about trip?

Dear Annie: My wife and I are in our 30s and live next to a very kind gentleman in his 60s, whose wife passed away four years ago. We get along very well with him and have been very generous in looking after him. He has always made his gratitude for our filling the void in his life very apparent.

He hired my wife two years ago to come over weekly to prepare meals, clean the house and do his laundry. He pays her well.

Recently, he asked us whether she would accompany him when he travels for three weeks on business to do those same tasks at the condo where he is staying. My wife wants to help him out while spending time in a city she has always wanted to see. I agreed to it with the understanding that they have separate bedrooms. I am not the jealous or suspicious type. However, my friends think I am being naive and this request is unacceptable. What is your opinion or advice? — *Torn*

Dear Torn: If you listen to the opinions of others, you will always flip-flop on your decisions

and never be able to stand on your own two feet. A job is a job, and if she enjoys her work and wants to see a new city, I don't see anything wrong with her going. People travel all the time for work with their bosses; it doesn't mean they're having affairs.

In the future, try not to let your friends' opinions dictate how you should feel about something. No one knows your marriage better than you and your wife, so allow the decisions that you make as a couple to be made only by the two of you.

Dear Annie: I would appreciate your comments on this situation. I have the power of attorney for my 89-year-old mother, who has early dementia and is homebound. Her assets should last for the rest of her life.

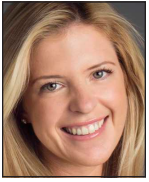
However, my 64-year-old sister and her two 25-year-old sons, who are living with my mom and are capable of working, don't work, and my sister has been supplemented financially by my mother all her life, largely because of poor financial decisions. My sister contin-

ually whines to Mom about her woes that involve large sums of money. Mom is so softhearted that she wants to always give in to the requests. I continually share with Mom that she needs to keep her money for her care, but she responds as if she doesn't care about her own future.

I have shared more than once with my sister that her drain on Mom's money needs to stop. However, my sister has taken very few, if any, steps to stop. About two years ago, I sat with my sister and made a budget. I showed her that she could avoid wasting \$1,000 per month if she would change her habits. This led to very little change. Any suggestions on how to be sure Mom's money will last her? — *Worried About Mom*

Dear Worried: What your sister is doing may be a form of financial elder abuse and thus illegal. Having power of attorney, you're in a position to act to protect your mom's finances — and I suggest you act quickly. The best course might be for you to take control of your mother's checking account. Consult an elder law attorney in your area. Bless you for looking out for your mom.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
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TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). What if you believed that there was nothing wrong with you and you don't need to improve a single thing about yourself? In that case, all efforts are optional — a fun experiment. Any resulting benefits are a stroke of felicity!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The game is on, and there is an unconventional and imaginative prize at stake. This bit of whimsy is more motivating to you than money or validation from a VIP. For reasons you cannot explain, you simply need to win.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). There are a lot of questions you could ask yourself to spur the situation in a better general direction. The very best question today just might be: "How can I have the most fun with this?"

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're safe — safer than most of humanity that has ever lived. The biggest threat to you is in how you interpret what's going on. Is it stressful? Sure. But not too stressful. It's doable. You can handle it, and you will prevail.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It really doesn't matter where the blame properly belongs. Step up, assess the situation and begin repairs. If the broken thing is a relationship, you'll be especially speedy and adept at fixing this.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your contentment generates joy in others. Your smile melts hearts. Who knew it was possible to make such a difference in the world just by being genuinely happy?

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Today the passion you feel for a cause or a kind of work is more powerfully energizing than romantic fervor. One action will lead to the next, and soon you'll be swept into a dizzying momentum.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Even the most ordinary, worn-in topic can be made riveting by a skilled speaker, a phenomenon you'll experience today when a certain intriguing someone speaks the plainest, most sparkling words to you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). One source of encouragement is not enough, especially if it's a source that's very familiar to you. You need more support, and you'll get it when you branch out and tell new people what you're up to.

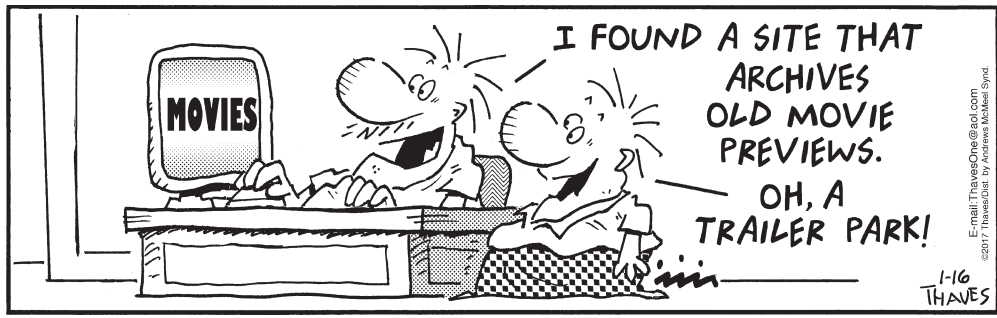
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Everyone feels fragile sometimes. When it's them, you have compassion, telling them to take it easy. Do the same when it's you. Sure, you're tougher than most, but you are also every bit as deserving of compassion.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). How can you feel more at ease in a situation? Part of it is just getting to know people better. It takes time, and it's worth it. When you're comfortable, the charisma kicks in. You get 'em laughing and loving you.

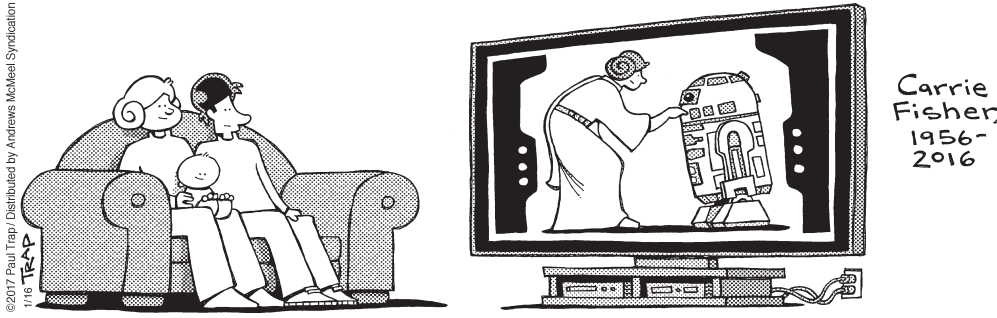
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). In the case of public praise, it's good to know you're appreciated. On the other hand, acknowledgement can kindle unexpected feelings in you, such as embarrassment. For this reason you're driven to do low-key or anonymous work.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 17). Your best strategy is to come up with one single goal for the year. Commit yourself and tell everyone. The more public pressure the better. Next month brings a wealth of helpful people. In June you will be called by the energy of a place; opportunities await. Your family will grow in the late summer. Libra and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 14, 29, 47 and 8.

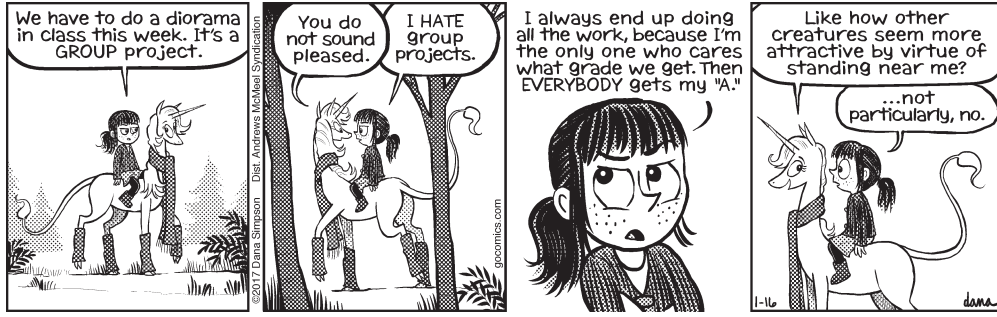
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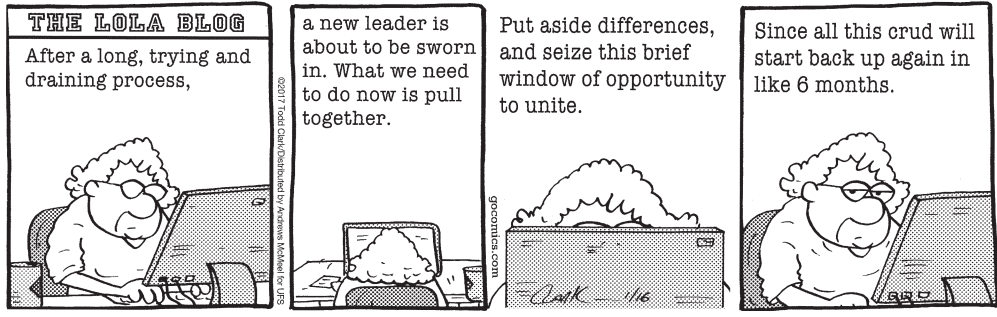
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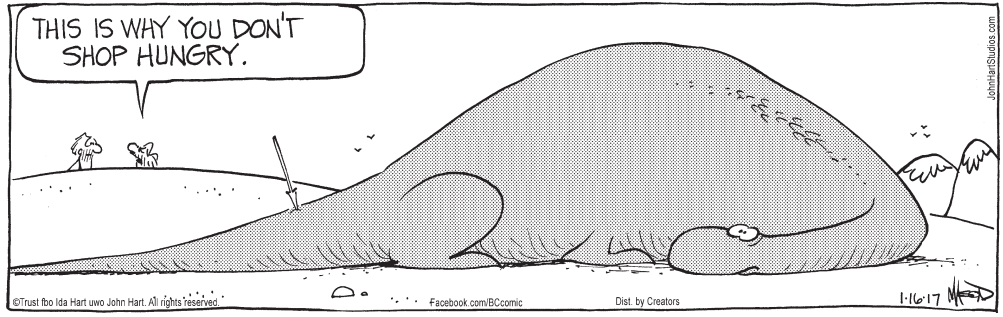
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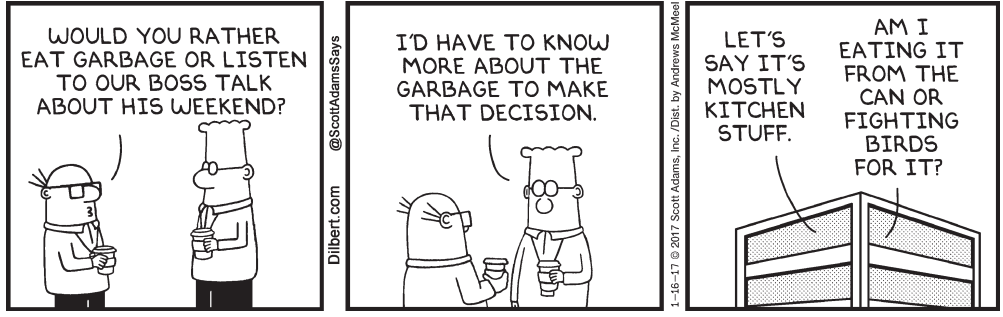
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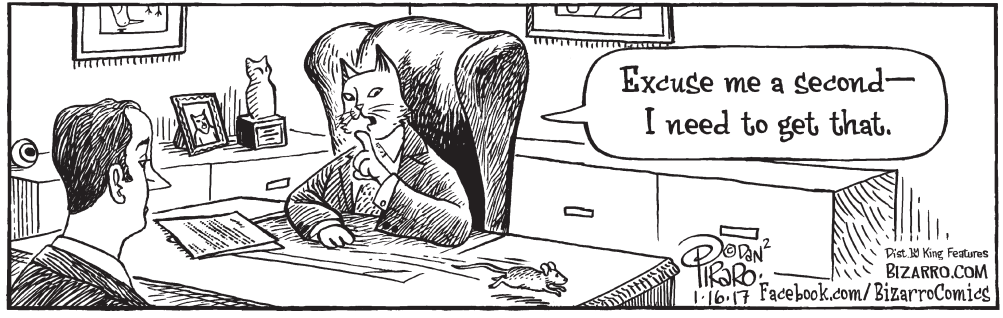
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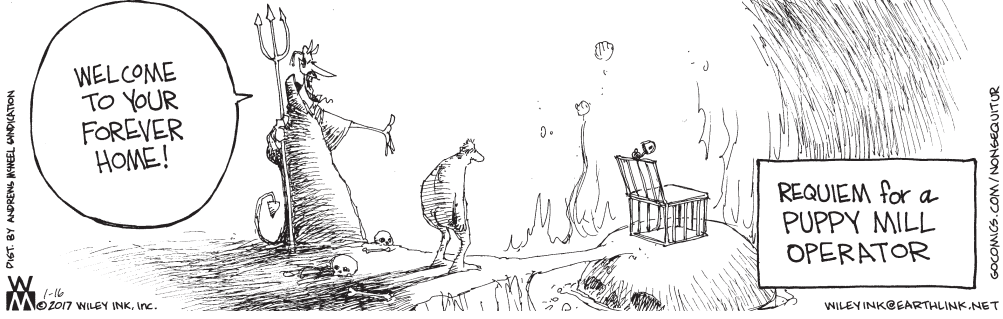
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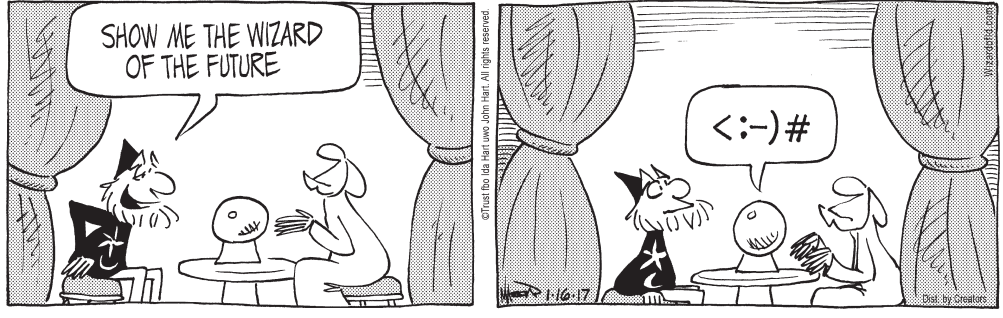
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