

# Not gonna return the honor

**Dear Annie:** I was at a dinner party with my girlfriends last week, and we got on the subject of weddings. Someone we know had posted wedding photos on Facebook, and it got us talking about all the details — dress, location, etc. When the wedding party was mentioned, my friend “Jessica” said, “Well, of course, I’ll let you girls all pick your dresses when I get married.” I looked around and thought, “Me? I would be one of her bridesmaids?” I was pretty stunned. Jessica and I have known each other for years, but we only just started getting to know each other one-on-one a few months ago. She’s a lovely girl, and I am glad we are better friends now, but truthfully, I’d feel a little out of place in her wedding party. More importantly, I know I won’t ask her to be a bridesmaid at my wedding. I’m dreading that situation. Any thoughts on this? — *Not! Always a Bridesmaid*

**DEAR ANNIE**



Annie Lane  
Creators  
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is even engaged yet. No need to start sweating her wedding plans. Whenever that time actually comes, the two of you may be much closer and you’ll be happy to play an important role in her special day. And don’t worry; you don’t have to make someone a bridesmaid purely because you were one of hers. There are so many other factors — the size of your wedding party, whether you have sisters, sisters-in-law or longtime childhood friends to include, etc. A true friend wouldn’t hold it against you.

**Dear Annie:** I like to read advice columns, but I usually skip the response to the problem. Invariably, the answer will be “seek therapy,” as if that were some kind of magic solution. Let me tell you what “seeking therapy” means for me and others.

I live in a small town; resources for therapy are scarce. My insurance does not cover counseling. I could, conceivably, drive an hour to the nearest large city for quality therapy. I would have then spent an hour driving there and back, an hour in the appointment — three

hours in which I lost potential wages, shelled out money I can’t spare and used gas I was counting on for work.

This doesn’t even address the issue of getting my employer to OK my missing work on a regular basis and the fallout that comes from being known as an employee with issues.

Turn to my religious adviser? Don’t have one. Talk to my physician — during the 10 minutes he spares me to write a prescription I can’t afford?

Combine all these issues for two people seeking couples counseling and look at the likelihood of success.

If you detect a touch of bitterness in my letter, it is because it is there. Telling me to seek therapy is akin to saying, “Let them eat cake.” — *Frustrated*

**Dear Frustrated:** Thank you for this reminder of how difficult it can be to find mental health care. Have you tried remote counseling? Services such as BetterHelp and Talkspace connect patients with health care professionals via video chats, text messages and phone calls. This might be a more convenient and affordable option for you. Be well.

**TOMORROW’S HOROSCOPE**

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** If a person seems always either up or down and never balanced, it’s a sign that you are in for a roller coaster ride should you choose to get close. People line up for such rides, which are usually expensive and brief.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** Choose teammates who want to win. They’ll help you to victory. But more importantly, choose teammates who want to play, who love the game and who have the will to prepare. Just being around these types is a win.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** There was a time when you were intimidated by the prospect of calling someone you don’t know. Today you’ll look forward to the surprise and education that always comes from a fresh contact.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** In business, the bottom line is ROI: return on investment. Why not make ROI the bottom line in everything you do today? When you’re clear what you’re getting out of each action, you’ll choose most efficiently.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Make no promises. Give no quick answers. This especially applies to feedback. Receive the tips, acknowledge the tipper and then take time to reflect and assimilate the implications.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Today’s cosmic gift is talent for storytelling. Creative people will be drawn to your tales. This could be the start of a community. Listen as well as you present and you’re golden.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** No one is fully formed. You see the potential in others, and you will also have excellent ideas about how to direct it. Those are best shared exclusively with those who ask for help.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Team efforts don’t always have to be equal so much as mutually satisfactory. Sometimes you have to take yourself out of the equation in order to make sure that the other person is pulling his or her weight.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** You’ve paid your dues, and maybe you think others should pay theirs, too, before they get to enter the “cool club.” Then again, things have changed so much since you started. Consider creating a new policy.

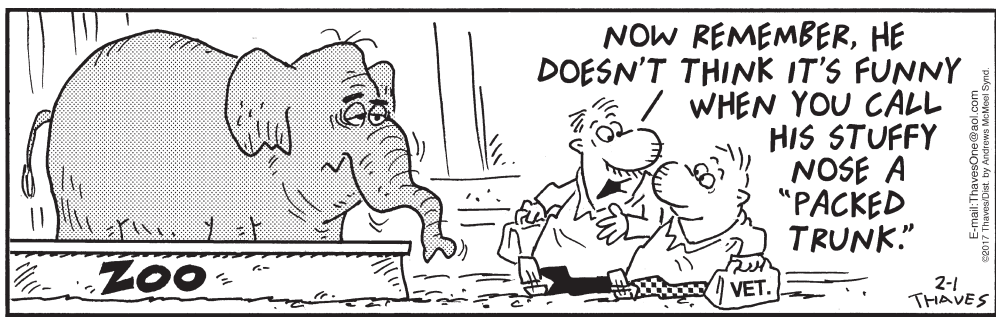
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** You can accomplish more. The limitations are in your mind. Look at the one who is doing it differently. Study the competition. What do the gurus have to say? This is an information-gathering period.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** You are chasing an object of affection that is chasing another object of affection, and this is how love makes the world go around. Hopefully you won’t lose heart. Did you notice that you’re also being chased?

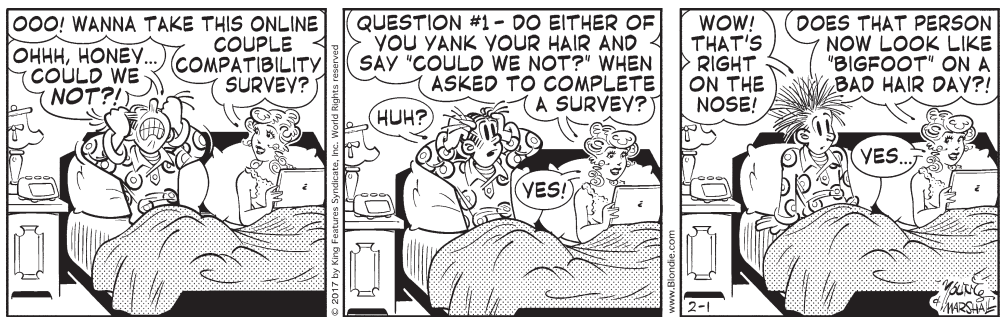
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Which approach is best? Should you push and drive your team, or should you lift and support them? Both ways are valid and needed at different times. Test the waters. Get a better reading of the situation and the group.

**TOMORROW’S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 2).** Your excitement surges as a gleaming goal appears within reach. The final 10 percent of the journey is the hardest stretch. New challenges at work in March invite you to experiment and play. Singles meet someone special in June. September brings physical strength and the willpower to become quite fit. Taurus and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 20, 44, 19 and 28.

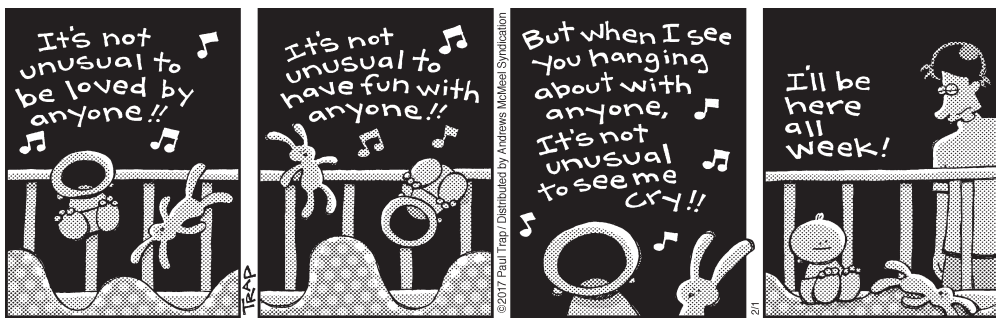
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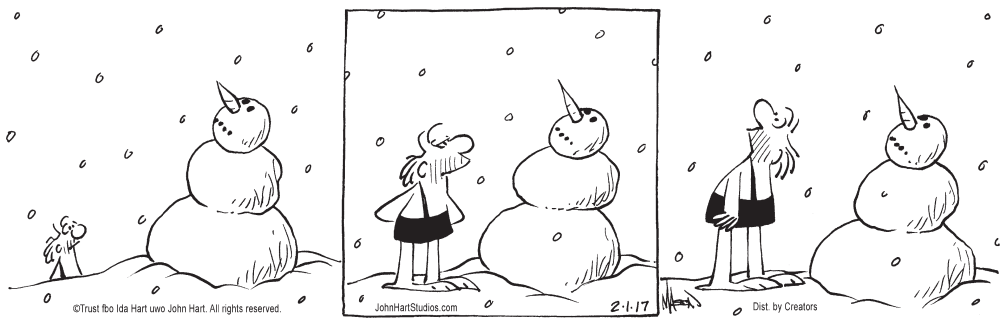
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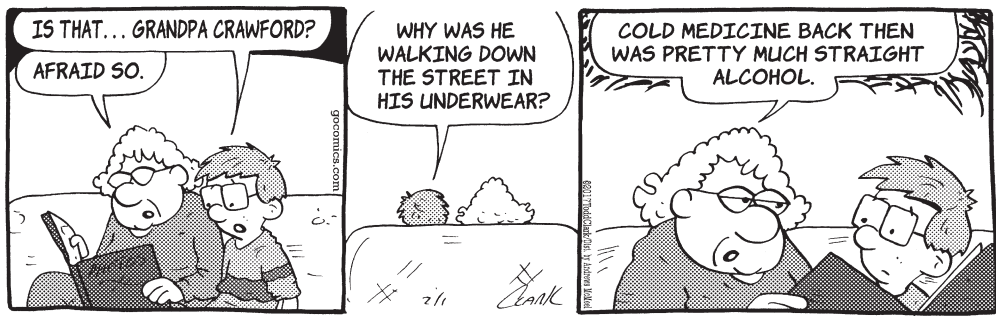
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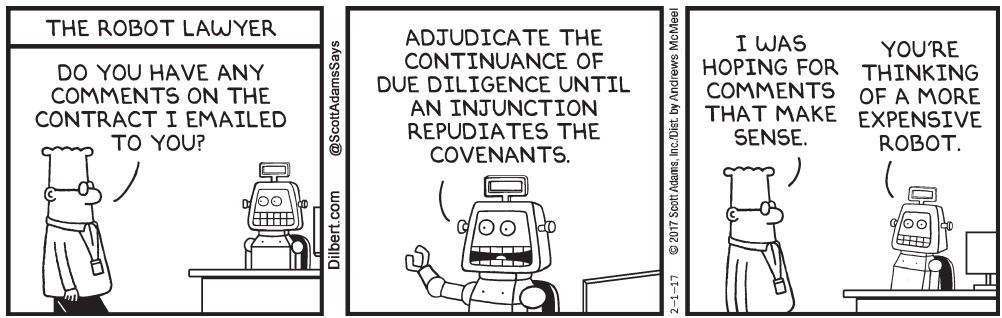
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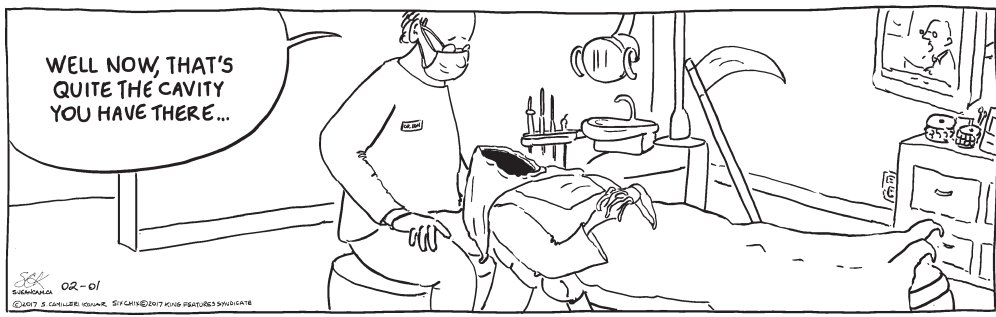
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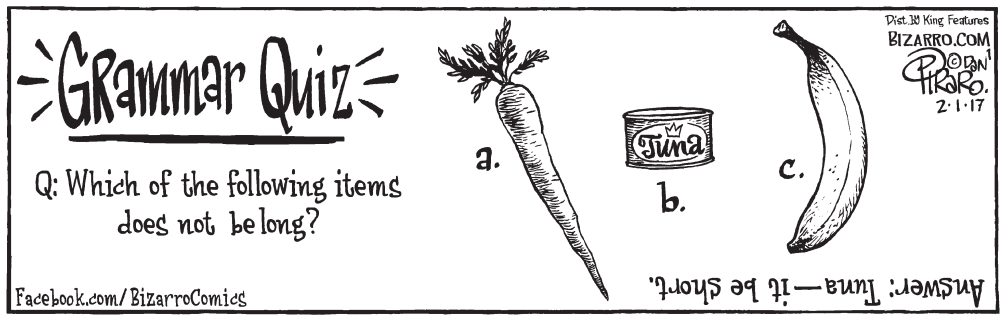
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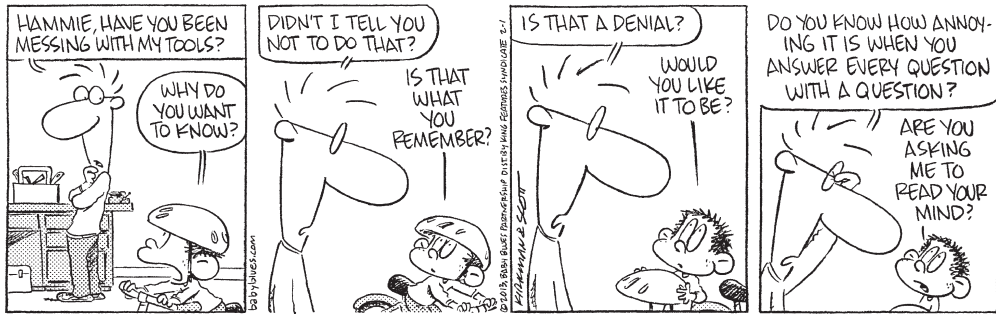
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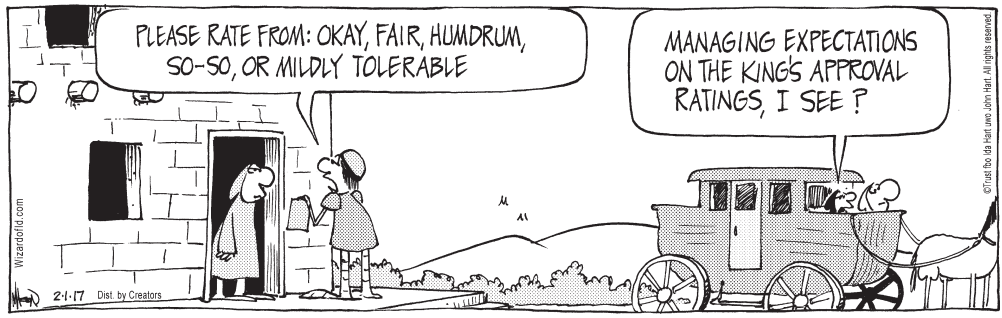
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