

Family leaves her out

Dear Annie: A few years ago, my son "Bill" and his family moved to a new state. They left me behind with no family or friends because they chose my ex over me (because I'm disabled and they needed someone to help with the kids while they were at work). It broke my heart, to the point that I didn't care whether I lived or died.

I prayed to God to help me, and thanks to Him, I ended up finding an apartment that I could afford in my son's new town. I was so excited that I'd be close to my grandbabies and my son. I got a Realtor, a moving company and a plane ticket.

Things started going badly as soon as I got there. My son and his wife didn't bring my grandbabies to the airport, and all we did was ride past their house. When I asked about going to see his new house, he told me that I was being overbearing and I'd go to his house when he invited me. I started to question why I'd even moved.

I have a bunch of furniture

I ordered online that is still sitting unassembled in boxes. Bill lives less than five minutes away but always has a reason for why he can't help me around the house — e.g., his long hours at work, his three children and his housework. My ex-husband also lives with them, and my daughter-in-law has told me that he does the laundry. To me, that is the most time-consuming chore. I don't see how housework could fill all your days off if laundry is already done for you!

I just want my apartment to look the way that I envisioned it. I live on disability and can't really afford to pay people to come help. My son and his wife have no problem coming over and borrowing money from me. (I took out a \$5,000 loan for them in my name.) I'm feeling alone and depressed. Should I give up on their helping me and including me in family events? — *Brokenhearted Mom*

Dear Brokenhearted: All

the outside help in the world won't help you if you don't first learn to help yourself. Achieving more personal independence will allow you to have a healthier relationship with your family. It will also empower you to have a healthier relationship with yourself.

Try getting involved with a local church or community activity to make some friends. Don't give your son any more loans. Instead, save that money for you. As soon as you can afford it, hire a handyman for one day (ask a neighbor for a recommendation) to come assemble the furniture that's still sitting in boxes. It will be well worth the money for you to have the peace and rest that come with a happy nest.

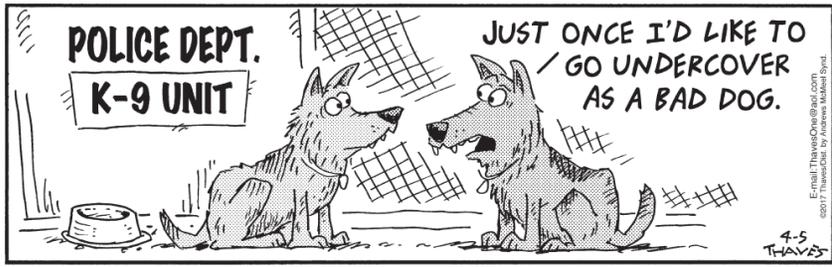
Finally, you mentioned at one point not caring about whether you lived or died. Please, if you're ever in such a dark place again, reach out to a counselor, a religious adviser or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255). Do not give up. There is a light at the end of the tunnel; in fact, there's light all around it. You just can't see it yet.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

FRANK AND ERNEST



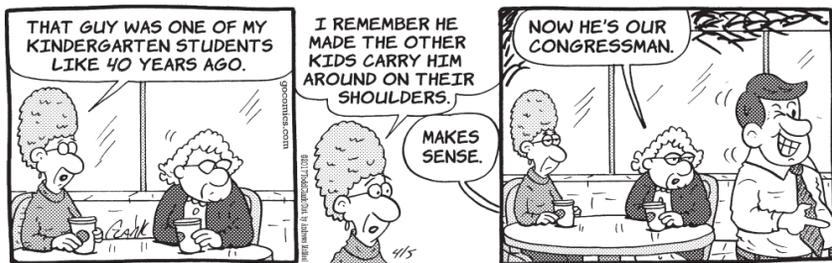
THATABABY



PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



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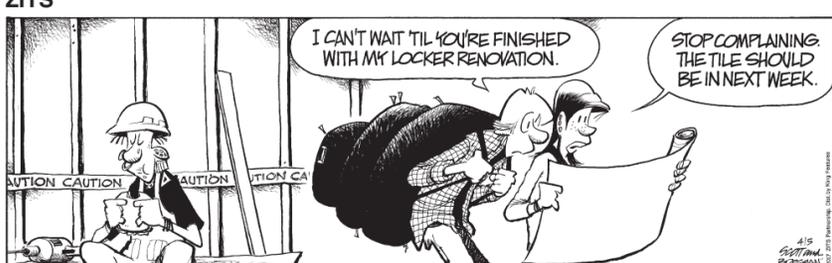
MUTTS



BABY BLUES



ZITS



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). What if you just do what's easy for you? The thing you're struggling against will drift away. You'll find out that some of the drama in your life was totally unnecessary. There's a lot that just isn't your battle to fight.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll find a partner, and then you'll find another. Which is best? Why do you need just one? Both will do. Two partners will be best in this instance.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Solving the problem will be better than escaping it. A fellow air sign will be your best ally in this endeavor. Air signs are Gemini, Libra and Aquarius.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). There is a mysterious world inside of you. The one who recognizes that you are no ordinary person, that there is a special and complicated puzzle in you that can never be solved — this person will capture your heart.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Is it a waste of time to be organized? No one will pay you or award you for it. Yet being organized is a huge benefit. It helps you think better and be better. You won't regret today's organizational efforts.

VRGO (You know how people are. Give 'em the same stuff and they will find radically different ways of interpreting it. It's essential that you find your own interpretation. No one else's will fit.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The words "I love you" can mean all kinds of things, most commonly today, "Let's get off the phone." Your sensitivity to the meaning behind the words will steer you well.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The world is your playground. Playgrounds are not inherently exciting, though. They need people on them to be of interest. Of course, if nothing is fun, it's not the thing; it's you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Everyone knows that diversity makes the group stronger. If you are different from the rest, they need you. And don't try to attract people who think like you. You'll be better for the challenge.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You've done a lot of believing in the strengths and competence of others. It's about time you thought about your own might. Your competencies are real. Believe.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). People have a tendency to adjust their values to fit their behavior. Maybe both are out of whack. You'll look at your situation with more compassion and try to find a frame that fits.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Give two people the exact same information and each will react radically differently. This is why you stock your life with a bunch of different friends from varied backgrounds. You want a global view of things.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (April 6). You'll gravitate toward creative people this year, and you'll find a group of friends that really supports you there. Attractive people will decorate your life in the next 10 weeks. The change next month will take some adjusting to, but you'll get there and be happier for the process. Solve a problem at work; make a ton of money in July. Taurus and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 30, 22, 21 and 13.

BLONDIE



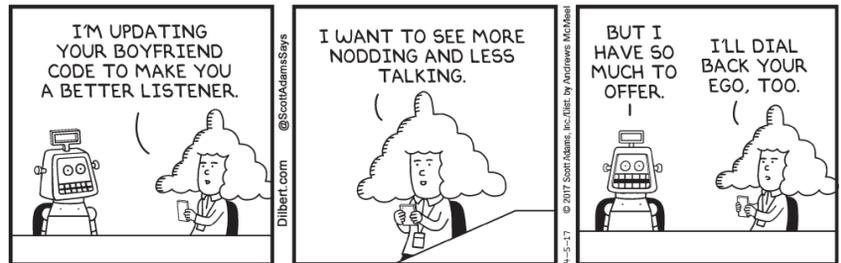
SALLY FORTH



B.C.



DILBERT



BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

