

How can I get out of a slump?

Dear Annie: My husband of 44 years passed away from complications of Alzheimer’s disease. I cared for him at home for years. He was 79 when he passed away; I was 71. We were extremely close and had a wonderful life together.

Sometime after my husband’s passing, a friend whom I had dated in high school got in touch with me. He asked whether he could drive over for a short visit. I finally consented. He is divorced and has two children. We became friends again, and he visited again. He called, texted and was very attentive overall. I met his children and visited with them.

But then he wouldn’t call for days, even though he said he would. When I didn’t hear, I was genuinely concerned. Eventually, I found out he was drinking. As time passed, his behavior changed. He became critical of little things, insinuating that he liked me better when I didn’t have my glasses on or commenting that he noticed that my arthritis caused me not to get around as well, etc.

In the meantime, he had a mini

stroke, fell and broke his ribs, and fell off his four-wheeler and broke his hip. He also ended up in the hospital twice last year because of his drinking. He told me that he loved me and always would.

One day, he told me he was beginning to feel smothered by our relationship and felt it was best we not talk so much. I was shocked. I had given him a Bible and devotional books and invested time in him hoping he would get his life straightened out.

He wants to keep staying in contact. It makes me uncomfortable, and I feel that he lies often, as I have caught him in several lies. He said he didn’t want to lose me. I think he is narcissistic and thinks it’s fine to call when he wants to, and I don’t think he wants to have to be there for me when I want to talk. I see a pattern with him. He does it to others, too.

I can’t believe I didn’t see what type of person he is. What can I do to get myself out of the slump I am in? I have had other men invite me to go places, but I have no desire to date.

I did see a counselor for a while, but she has retired. She used to say he’s “a drunk” who won’t get any better until he does something about his drinking.

I do have many friends and am fortunate, although lately, I have withdrawn from others. I know this is not good or normal. What do you suggest? — *Feeling Guilty and Remorseful*

Dear Feeling: Until he gets his life straightened out, this man is not fit to be anyone’s romantic partner — especially not yours, as you seem to have the type of personality to want to care for and fix broken people. Though that desire is admirable in and of itself, it steps perfectly in time with the dance of addiction. You always rescue him, and he always gives you more rescue missions. That you’re withdrawing from others is a sign of codependence. You need to quit the relationship cold turkey.

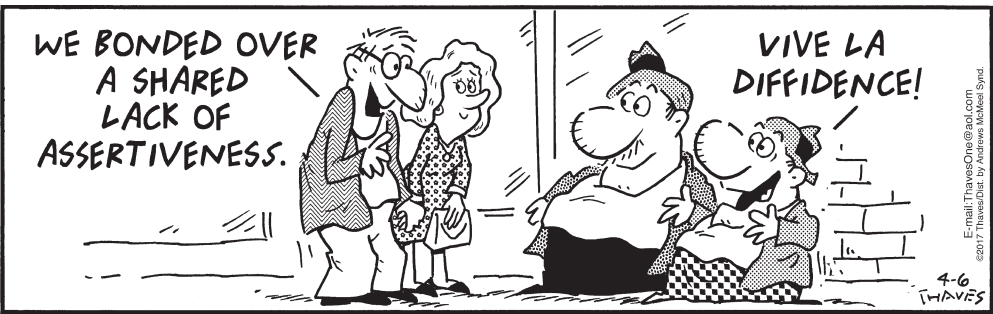
Force yourself to spend time with friends, even if you don’t feel like it yet. If counseling was helpful to you, find a new counselor. The good news is that you seem to have a handle on the situation already. Now you just need to start steering.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
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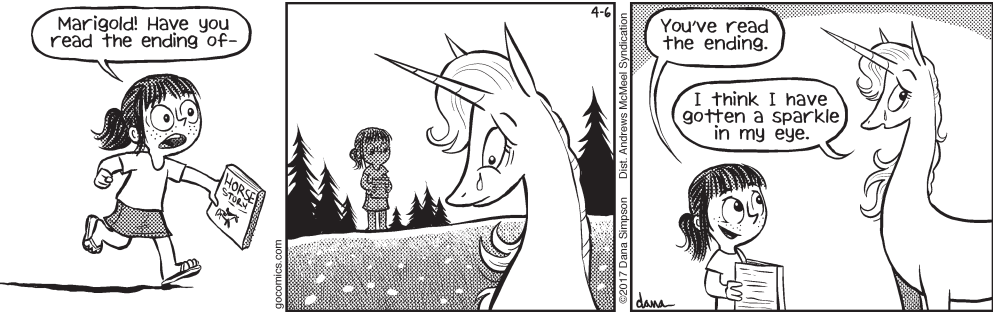
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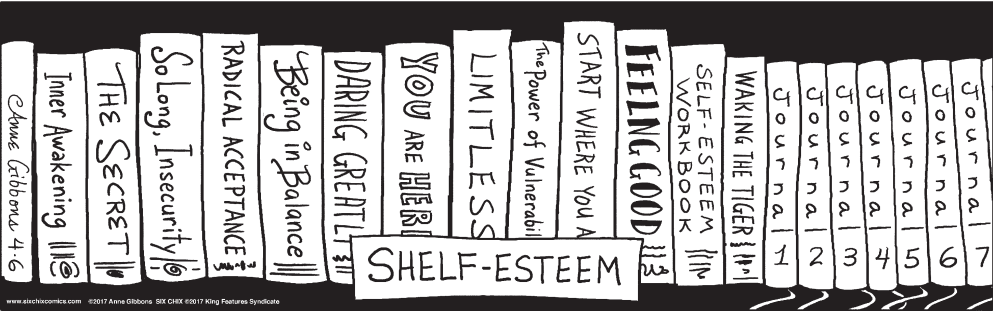
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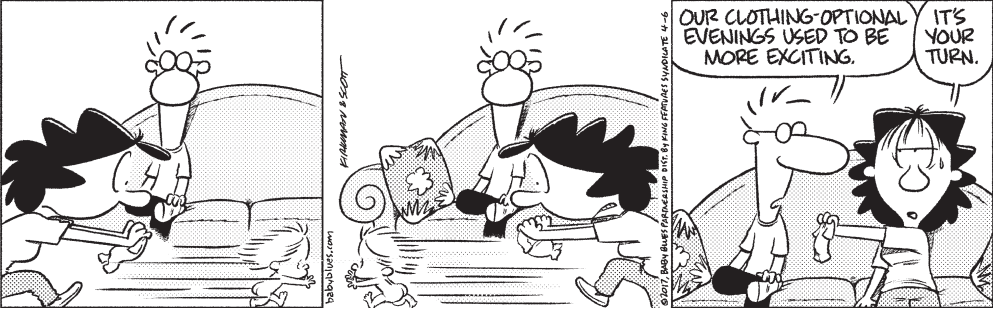
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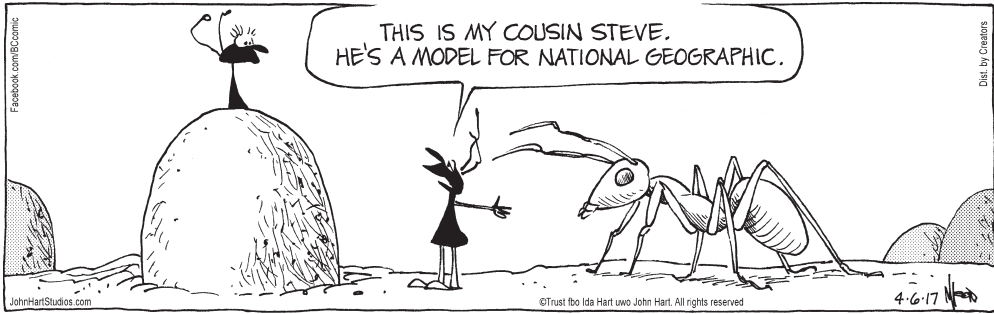
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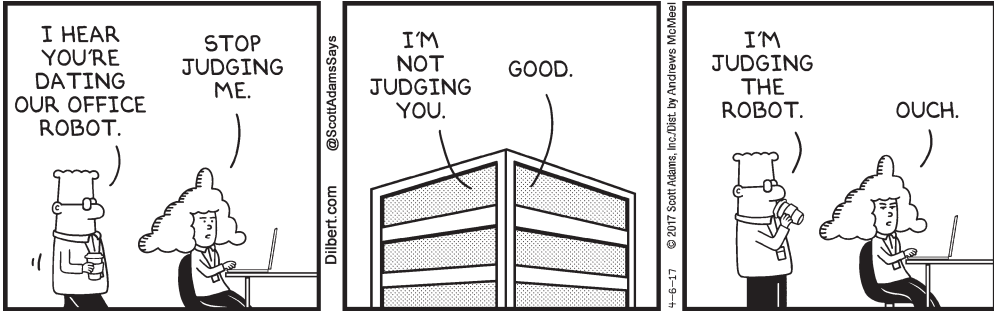
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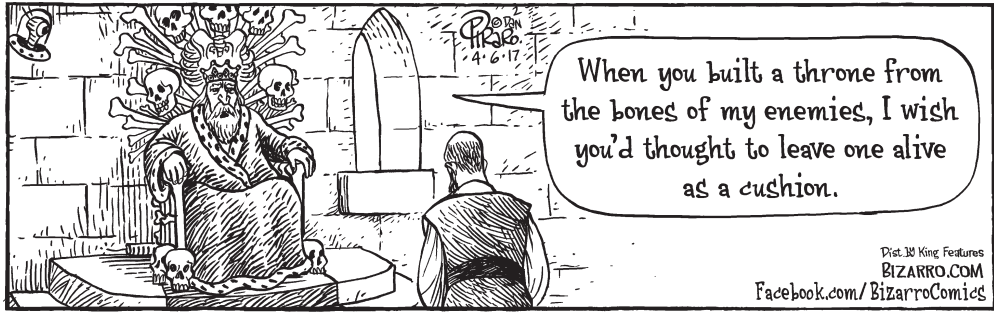
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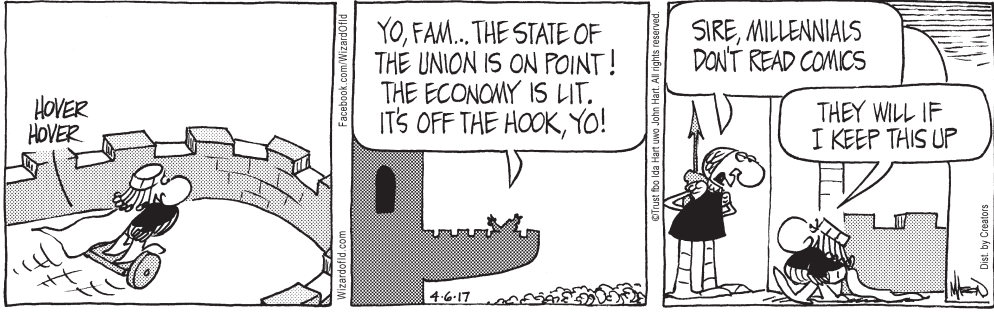
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