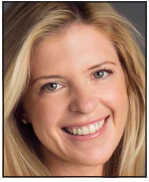


An old flame still flickers

Dear Annie: I recently reconnected with an old girlfriend. We had not spoken, texted or seen each other in almost five years. She broke my heart about five years ago, and my mother was killed shortly after that. I've not dated or wanted to have a serious relationship since.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

About three months ago, I told my daughter that I was ready to meet someone. So she brought up Match.com and signed me up, just so I could browse. The very first profile I saw was my ex-girlfriend's! My daughter said, "Text her, Dad. It's a sign." After debating it, I did. And I came to find out that she really had not dated anyone in five years, either, and that she had stopped browsing Match.com more than a year and a half ago.

Well, we started texting and then meeting for lunch and then dinner, and next thing I know, we are spending almost all our time together. I was not the best boyfriend years ago, but I changed so much after my mother's death. And this woman really noticed a huge change in me. She even got

emotional about how well I treat her and how much I spoil her and how amazingly sweet I am now. She said, "No one has ever treated me as well as you do now!" That's exactly how I promised myself I would try to behave.

I've fallen in love with her. I'm so scared to tell her, and I'm so scared to lose her. But I want her to know I've fallen for her now much differently than I did in the past. I always ask her now, "Were you like this before — funny, smart, witty?" She says, "Yes, but you were blind to it before!" And I was. I was going through a very bad divorce and losing a business, just to name a couple of things.

How do I convince her of this? I always tell her I'm insanely crazy about her. She tells me she feels the same. We are almost 50, and I'm not sure I can go through another heartbreak. — *Lost Love*

Dear Lost: Anything worthwhile comes with some risk. To win big, you have to bet big, and from the sound of this love affair so far, I'm betting on you. Just tell her you love her. Even if she

doesn't say it back, telling people you love them is great for their soul and yours.

Dear Annie: My wife and I are in our mid-80s and don't eat nearly so much as we did in our younger years. When we go out to eat, we usually share a meal. If we take guests out, we expect to pay for their meal. We try to allow the guests to order first, as it can make for an awkward situation if they order a full meal each and then we split a meal. I think this makes them feel uncomfortable. What is your take on this? — *W.C. in Waycross, Ga.*

Dear W.C.: My take is that you're very considerate, generous people. Based on that fact, I'm sure that however you're handling the situation now is the correct way to do so. Insisting that your guests order first is a good tactic to ensure that they don't downgrade their order after seeing that you two are splitting one entree. But don't feel bashful about politely explaining, "We simply don't have the appetites we used to, and we enjoy sharing a plate. But please, order whatever you'd like. Our treat." Such a warm statement, said with a smile, will surely melt away any awkwardness.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You care — a lot! In fact, today you may find that you care slightly more than feels healthy for you or good for the relationship. What would happen if you let go and trusted life's process?

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). A selfish someone would have you believe that doing what makes you happy is an indulgence. It couldn't be further from the truth. Do what makes your heart sing today, and the world will dance joyfully to your song.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). It's said that penguins fall in love and even give each other gifts. A male penguin has been known to search an entire beach for the right pebble for his mate. You've pretty high standards for love yourself these days.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're not petty; you're generous! You don't condemn anyone for committing minor social sins, such as interrupting others or talking over the entertainment. And yet, today, you'll favor those with superior social habits.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You've endured plenty of adversity on your own. The people who are in your life are there because you want them there, not because you need them. Today they sense your strength and also their honored position.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're often hopeful, but it's not necessarily your first response. That's why the one who makes you feel like there's something special and magical in your future is a person you should hang out with more often.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). It's as though there was a leap without a landing. The unfinished thoughts are beautiful in their incompleteness, if you can bear the tension that takes the place

of closure.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You may be considering taking things to the next level in a relationship, going from someone's "other" to someone's "only." Whether this is business-related or personal, exclusivity is a pretty big step, not to be rushed into.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). In the same way that marketers know scarcity can create an immediate impulse to buy, loss triggers love. Often, "the one that got away" is suddenly considered the best you've ever had, immediately after "getting away."

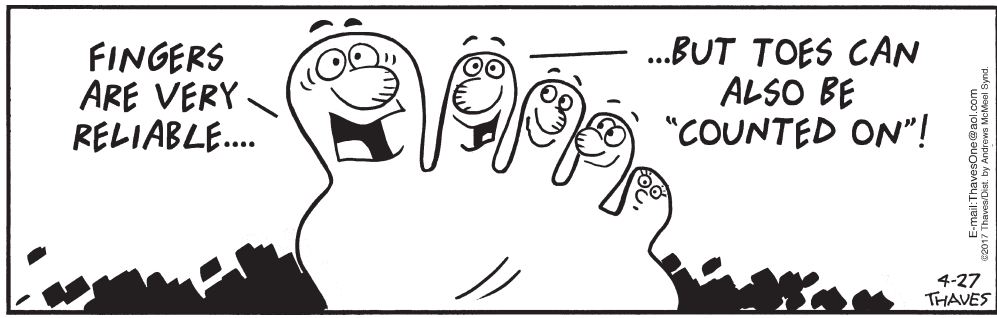
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). In some ways, you've become what you envisioned; you embody what you once envied; you project what you once only fantasized about. Satisfaction in this will be brief. You're already questing anew.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Do all you can to fortify your spirit and restore your body. Set yourself up to awaken in a good mood tomorrow so you're strong and ready for an amazing opportunity coming your way.

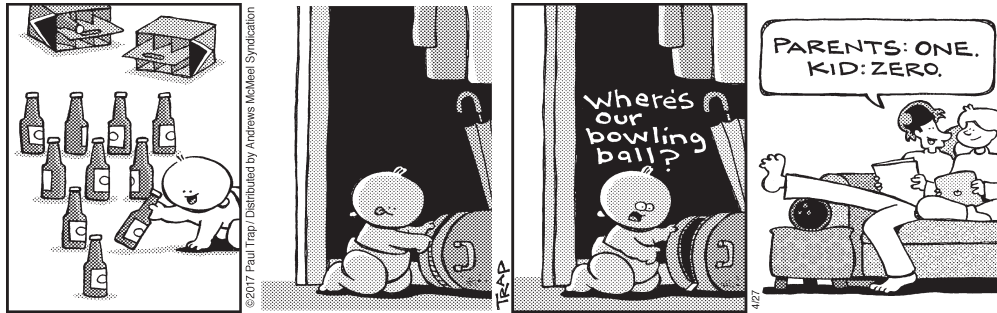
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You don't regret building your life around certain people and principles, but you do recognize that things change. You'll reorganize to make room for new influences.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (April 28). Relationships will thrive on stability. It's a year for extending roots, but that doesn't mean you can't also take vacations. In May you'll be offered what you've longed for. You'll follow your loved one into unknown territory and come to love the adventure you share there. Excellent news comes in June; a windfall comes in November. Sagittarius and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 1, 40, 33, 35 and 19.

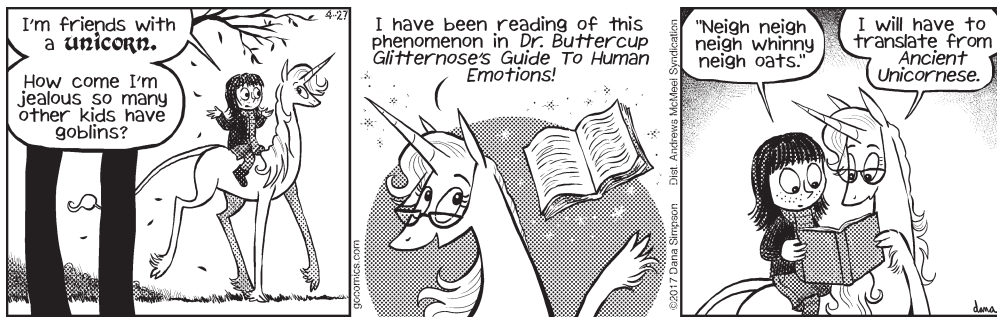
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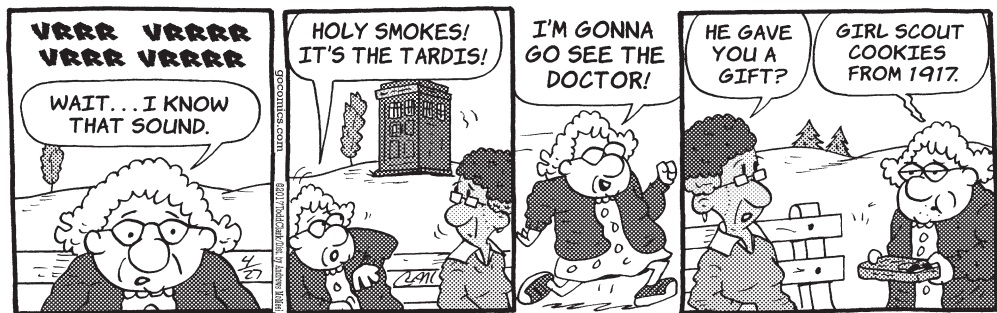
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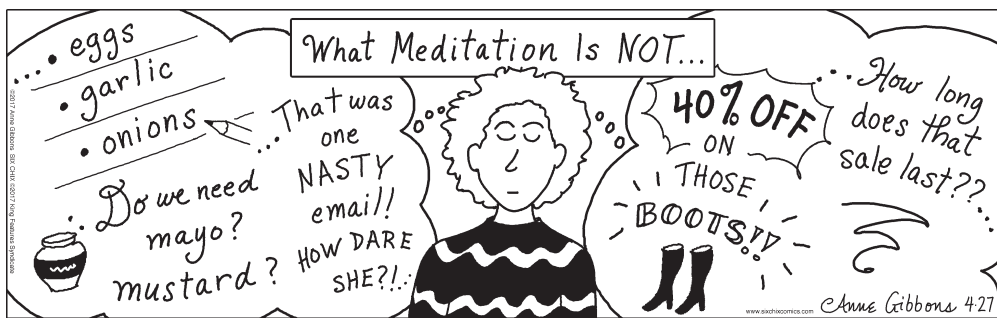
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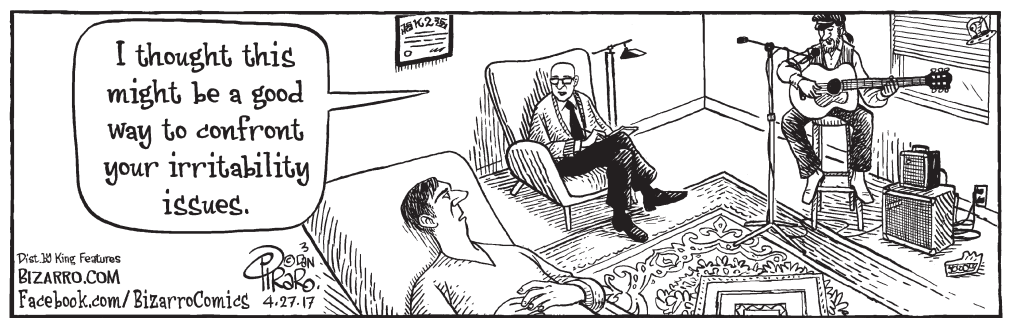
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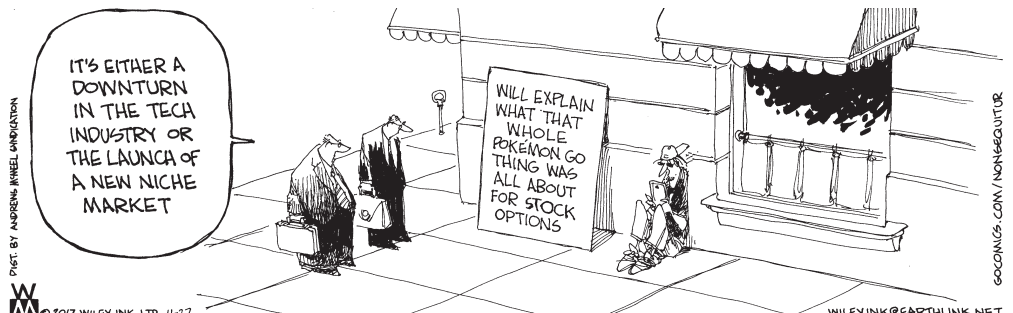
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