

Seeking relationship closure

Dear Annie: I feel like a cliché. About a year and a half ago, after six years of dating, "Jon" and I broke up — or more accurately, Jon broke up with me.

It blindsided me, especially because I had just relocated with him to another state about a month earlier. He said he was having personal issues and just wanted to be alone. He was drinking a lot and seemed really depressed at the time. I tried encouraging him to seek professional help, but he refused. I continued calling him periodically at first to check in and see whether he was doing OK. But I wanted to respect his wishes, and he didn't seem interested in getting back together, so I slowly began the process of healing and moving on.

About six months later, I started hearing from him again. He sent me gifts in the mail, references to inside jokes we'd shared over the years. He began calling a lot. I kept meaning to call him back, but for some reason, I didn't. Things were just different. I had started developing feelings for someone else. Eventually,

Jon seemed to get this and began moving on, too. But I never could have guessed how quickly he'd move on.

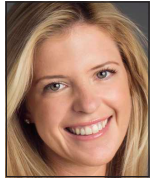
He started seeing a woman he'd met on a dating site, and within three months, they were engaged. Their wedding is next month. And as much as I'm happy — I'm in a new relationship myself — I still sometimes dwell on how things ended with my ex. And I don't get how he never proposed to me after six years but it took him only three months to pop the question to a woman who was practically a stranger. I know it's silly, but I even have thoughts like, "Was I so horrible that anyone who came after me seemed like immediate marriage material?" And I feel this sense of unfinished business because I never did tell him how much he hurt me. I don't think he knows, because he invited me to the wedding. (I respectfully declined.) Do you think that calling him or writing him a letter just to have one final conversation would give me some sense of closure? — *Conflicted*

Dear Conflicted: Perhaps the cheapest form of therapy is putting thoughts down on paper. So write Jon a letter, but don't send it. Instead, use it as a space to work out your feelings and figure out what's really stopping you from moving on. Closure is a gift we can only give to ourselves.

Dear Annie: As a retired pastor with over 40 years of ministry, may I suggest another response to "Trying to Save Our Church," who wrote in about two people causing problems in her church? If her church is part of a larger denomination, she could suggest help from a denominational leader, such as a bishop or superintendent. Having dealt with troublemakers such as the ones she described, I have found that such people or couples can and do cause significant damage to the harmony of a congregation. — *Reverend Barron*

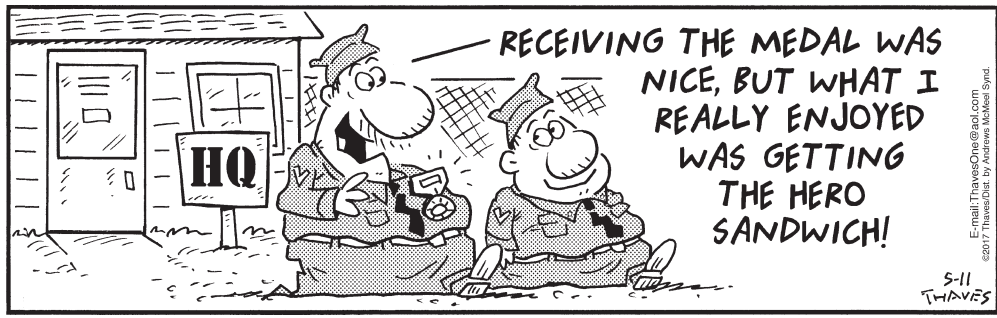
Dear Reverend: I was surprised by how many readers wrote in and mentioned that they'd dealt with similar problems at their churches. I'm printing your helpful, practical tip here because apparently, there are a lot of troublemakers out there! Thank you, Reverend.

DEAR ANNIE

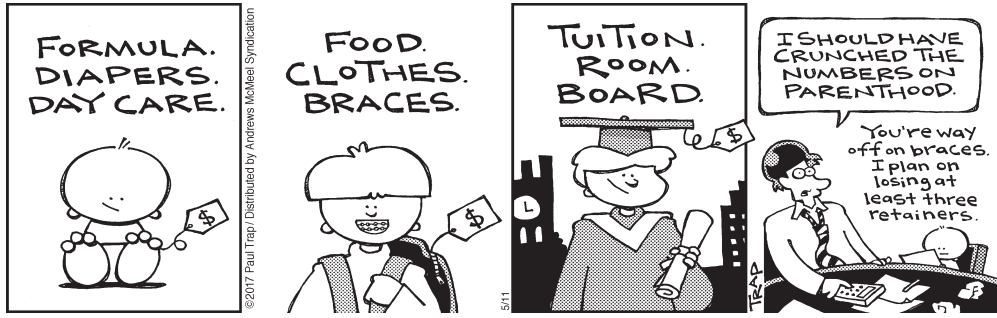


Annie Lane
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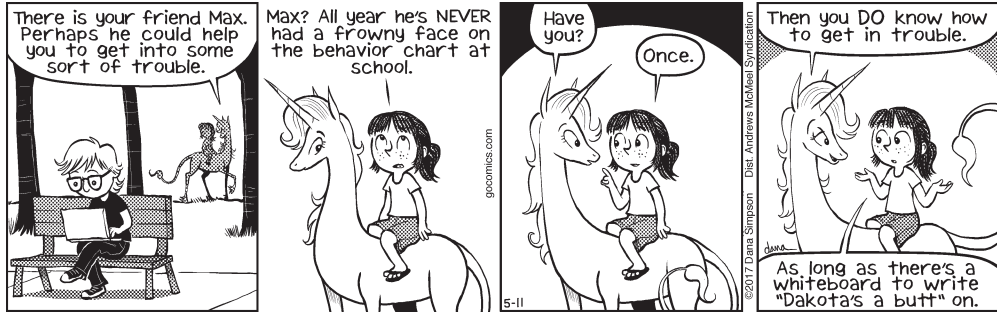
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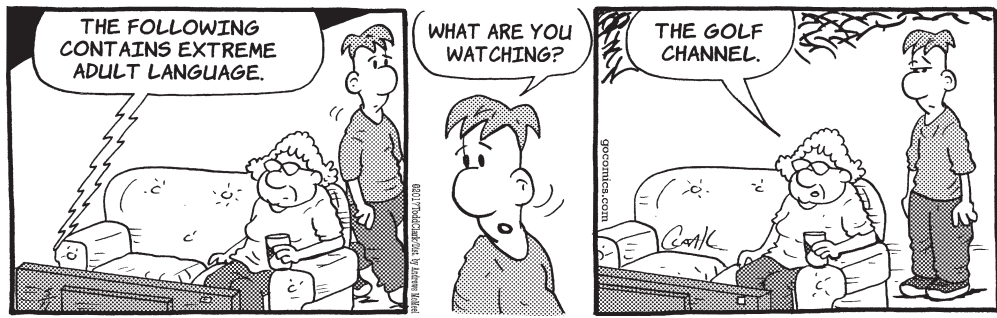
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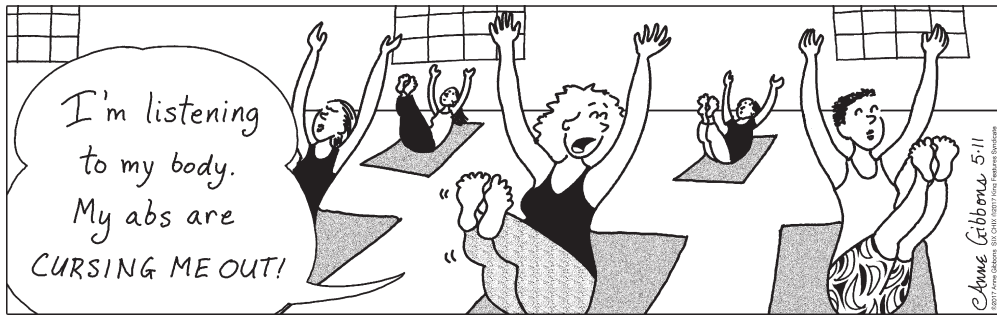
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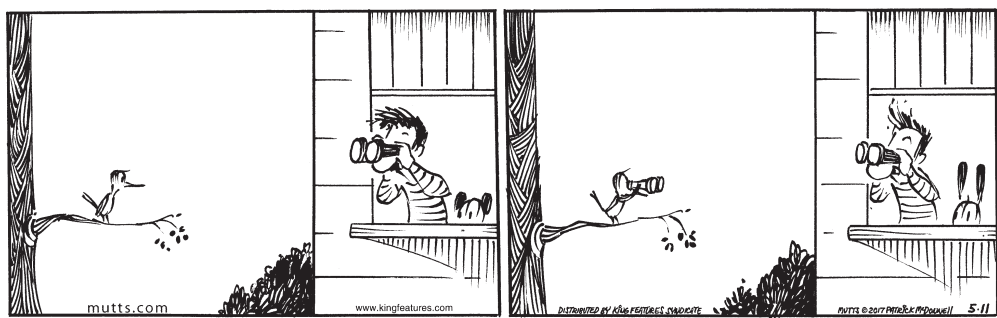
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TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The promise you make without saying the words "I promise" will be the easiest to keep. An action comes naturally, produces mutually satisfying results, and sets up an expectation that both will benefit from fleshing out.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Love is acceptance. People who love you won't ask you to change who you are in order to suit their purposes. They may make requests, but their requests will not require you to be someone else.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're multifaceted; it's true. And yet you're still very clear about who you are at any given moment, even in the transitional moments of becoming the next iteration of yourself.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Forgetfulness and obliviousness benefit you today. It might help you be more productive if you think of focusing as simply ignoring everything that's not what you want to accomplish.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You'll make plans. The more realistic you are about the cost of things (monetarily and energetically) the more successful your plan will be. Be sure and take into account every existing commitment you have in every area of life.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You'll be involved in the type of project or goal that seems quite impossible to accomplish — until it is accomplished, and then it will seem de rigueur. Right now it just needs a little more mind and elbow grease, that's all.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Pruning seems counterintuitive. Why cut healthy branches when the goal is growth? And yet, many generations of humans have known that making cuts can aid in maintaining the health and longevity of

the entire organism.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Everyone needs attention, and many will take to the brand you're giving now. You have a way of making people feel special. Some might call it flirting, though really you're just inclined toward congeniality.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). If it seems too good to be true, maybe you just haven't worked out what's in it for the other person yet. Dig deeper. Ask more questions. Figure that part out, because it's very important.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Contrary to the old saying, you absolutely can judge a book by the cover. Obviously you won't know the whole story, but you'll certainly get a feel for the tone, genre and sensibility of what's inside. Trust your first impression.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Socially aware, you're usually careful not to make things all about you. You think it's rude to draw too much attention. Today you don't have to worry, though: You're supposed to be the central character in this story.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). As much as you'd like to compartmentalize your life, personal commitments affect your energy just as much as work commitments do. You can afford to be choosy now about what you take on.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (May 12). You will be respected by many and widely praised and cherished by your inner circle. The second half of the year will be spent assimilating the exciting events of the warp-speed first half. Younger people will make your heart glad. Responsibilities will change in August. October is where your artil talents get featured. Capricorn and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 19, 30, 44 and 15.

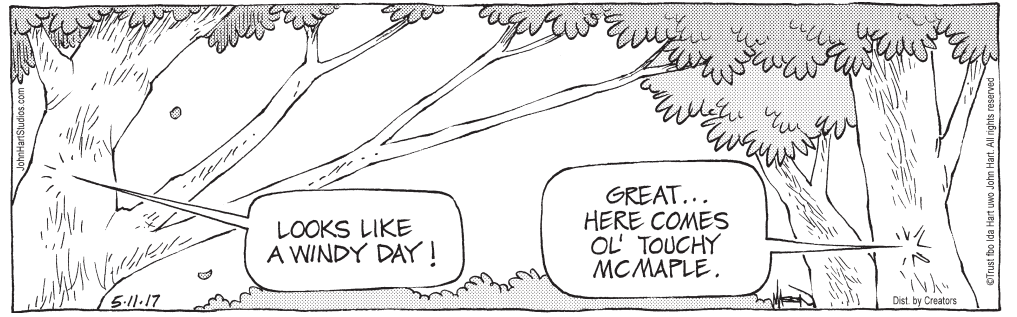
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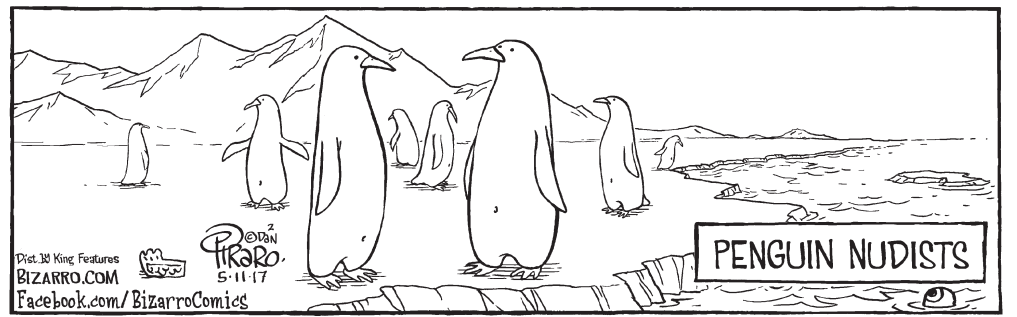
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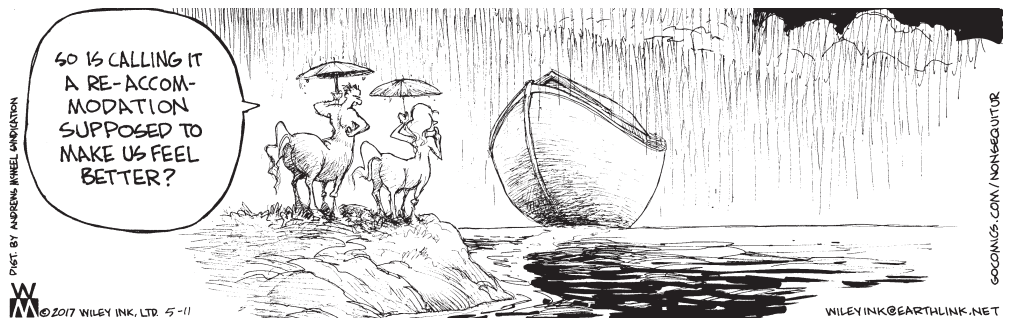
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