

# A birthday surprise letdown

Dear Annie: I am writing to you with a problem that probably seems pretty petty compared with some of the more life-or-death questions you get, but I am too embarrassed to bring it up with anyone else, so here goes.

I recently celebrated my 30th birthday. Weeks in advance, my husband promised me a great day. For weeks, I looked forward to it and imagined what he might have planned. We'd talked about hot air balloon rides not too long before that, so I was thinking that might be the secret plan.

The day arrived, and I woke up wondering what the plan was. Then I kept wondering. We watched TV and bummed around more than we usually would on a Saturday — which was a treat, in a way, but nothing special. Finally, around 6 p.m., he told me to get ready to go out; he had a surprise.

Well, he ended up taking me to a concert of one of his favorite bands. I like them, too, but he's definitely the bigger fan. I tried to conceal my disappointment. It's been a few weeks now, and I still find it nagging at the back of my mind. I

don't want to seem ungrateful. Is there any way to address this with him without hurting his feelings?

—Blah Birthday

Dear Blah: Expectation is the root of all disappointment. Though it's perfectly healthy to have stand-

ards for how you'd like to be treated in your relationship, it's important to learn how to manage expectations — and to take the initiative when it's really important to you that something go a certain way. I've known many people who love celebrating their birthdays in a big way, so they take the planning upon themselves. There's no shame in that.

Finally, I would just give your husband the benefit of the doubt on this one and communicate more clearly about your wishes next time.

Dear Annie: I just read the letter from "Crybaby," the woman who is embarrassed by excessive crying. Whenever she feels an extreme emotion — positive or negative — she cries.

I can empathize. I have the same problem, although for me it is almost always only for extremely

positive emotions. The thing is that I am a man. Forgive the gender stereotype, but it is really inappropriate for a male to cry a lot, especially when it's not even over anything bad.

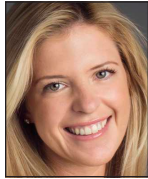
Anyway, I once happened to sit next to a psychologist on a long train ride, and I confided my problem to him. He basically said, "Look, this is just the way your body is wired. Your emotions come out through your tear ducts. Some people react in other 'inappropriate' ways. In your case, it is through tears. Accept that this is the way you are, and don't make a big deal of it, because chances are that this is not something you can change. It's not harmful, and if you don't make a big deal out of it, others will probably not, either. If they do, you can explain it any way you wish."

When people do comment, which is really rare, I simply say something to the effect of, "When I get emotional in certain ways, the tears flow. I'm not really crying; I'm just shedding tears. Please just ignore it."

—Another Crier

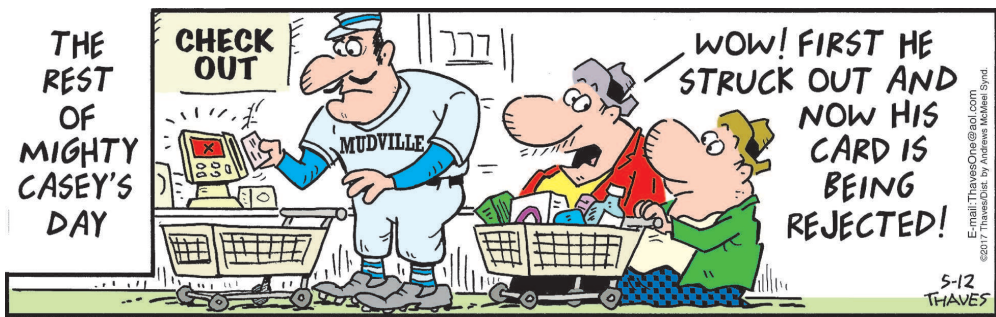
Dear Another: I'm sure your empathetic words will make "Crybaby" feel less ashamed of her active tear ducts.

## DEAR ANNIE

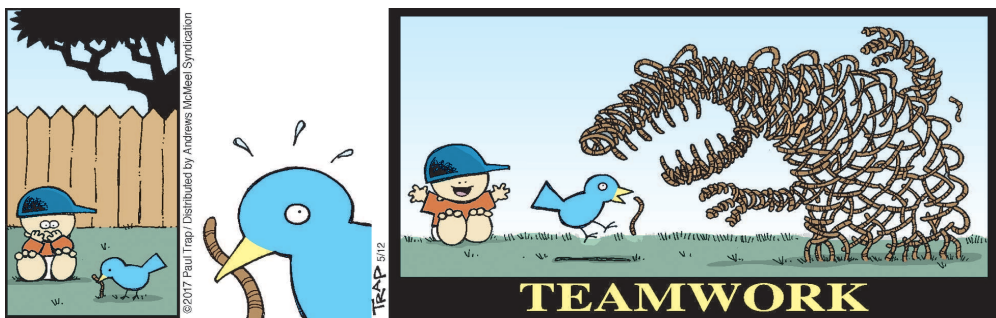


Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

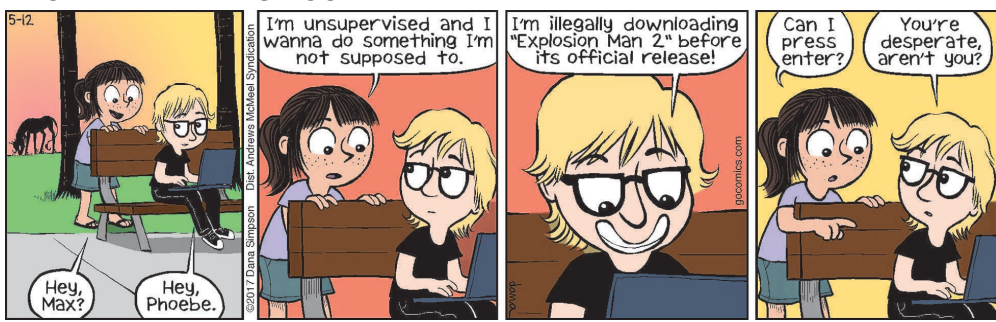
## FRANK AND ERNEST



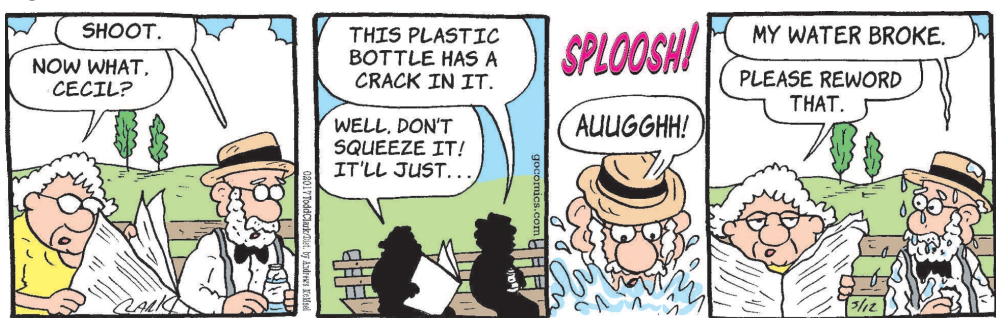
## THATABABY



## PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



## LOLA



## SIX CHIX



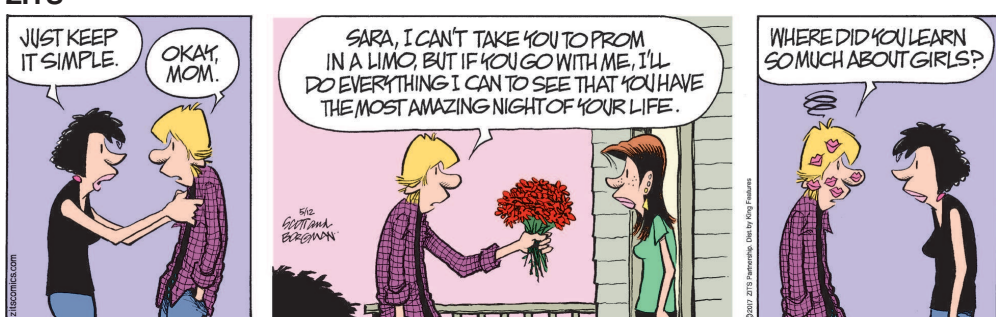
## MUTTS



## BABY BLUES



## ZITS



## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** For now, you don't have to worry about coming up with brilliantly creative or innovative solutions. In fact, you don't have to worry about doing so much as not doing. You'll be defined by what you say no to.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** Find what you lost track of. It could be a person, an item or a dream you let go of. You can get it back. Setting an intention to do so (and making it known) will be the first step.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** Bottom line, things don't have to be pleasant to have a positive impact. If it helps you grow in your capacity to understand complexity, keeps you up-to-date with trends, or expands your worldview, it's good for you.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** You'll look ahead and begin work on problems before you need to do so becomes urgent. Your next breakthrough idea will be inspired by something that is outside what you'd normally be exposed to.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** The issue only exists when your mind's eye zooms into the close view. Zoom out to the panorama and you'll see that that help is on the way, opportunities are nearing, and success is on the horizon!

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Don't try; do! Trying is for regrettable obligations. If you can't get totally behind it, drop it. Your resistance to free yourself is based in fear. What you should really be afraid of is wasting everyone's time. Be bold.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** The demonstrative elation upon arriving at a goal almost always happens in movies. In real life the dramatic payoff will be replaced by quiet but profound

satisfaction.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Diversify. New environments and people will be lucky for you. The wider your array of influences, the deeper your work will be. As a byproduct you may find that your work appeals to a greater number of people.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Acting out the motions of a self-directed, confident person will produce similar results to actually being a self-directed, confident person. Put on the brave smile and move forward.

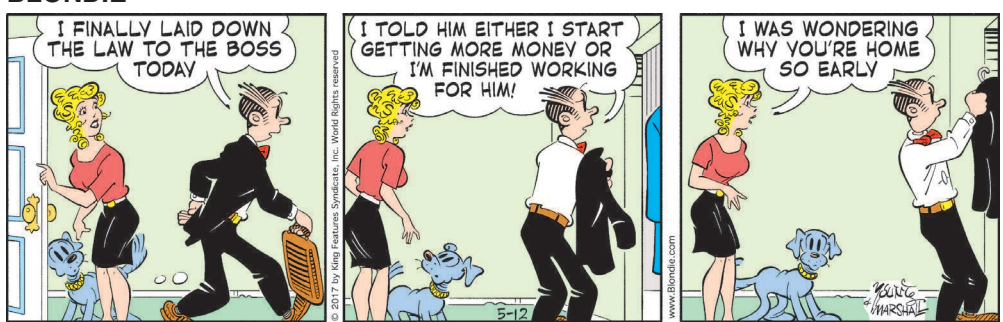
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** You'll be drawn to what can be measured, assured by the tangibly quantifiable, excited by the solidity of facts. With this approach, you'll help someone make sense of the world.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** It's nice to feel comfortable, but it's not necessary or even particularly common, especially among people of merit. You and the others of strong character consider comfort to be a luxury if not a warning signal.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Recognize what drains your self-control, and patch up the area to prevent future leaks. Unhappy relationships are a main drain, since you tend to take on the emotions of the people you are around.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (May 13).** Your optimism has excellent grounding, and you'll get hard proof of this over the next seven weeks. Friendships, even those not related to your work, will cause you to be hugely productive and richer, too. There's an unspoken contract that begins this month and completes one full circle by October. Sagittarius and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 10, 4, 44 and 14.

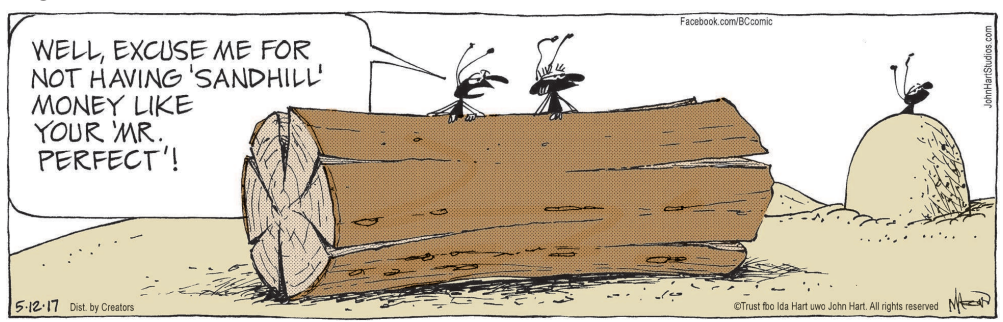
## BLONDIE



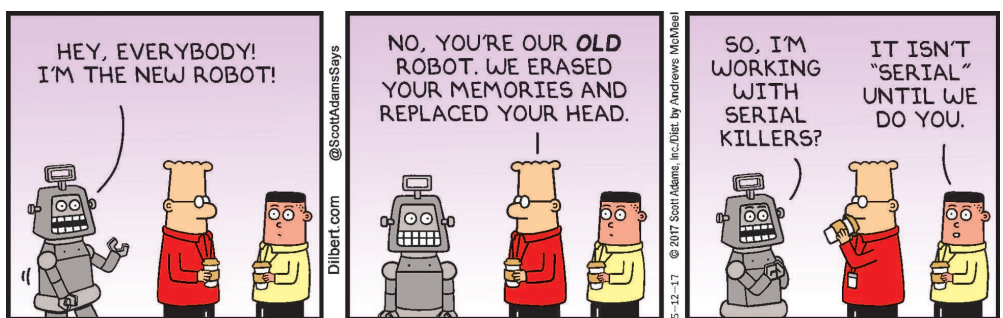
## SALLY FORTH



## B.C.



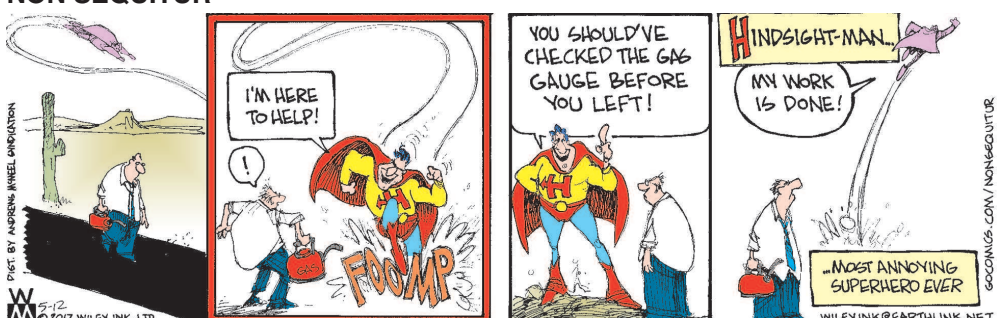
## DILBERT



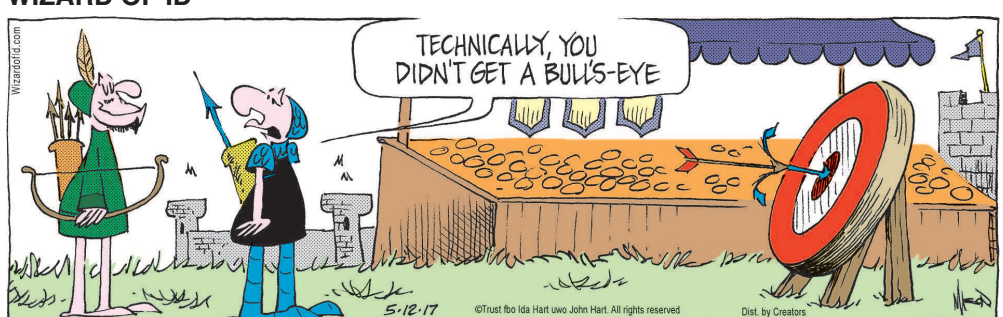
## BIZARRO



## NON SEQUITUR



## WIZARD OF ID



## ROSE IS ROSE

