

Revisiting 'thank you' etiquette

Dear Annie: Seven months after attending a wedding, I just received a computer-generated thank-you note. The note was printed on a label and then stuck on a purchased note card. Although it addressed us by name, it never acknowledged any gift given. It simply said they appreciated our "sharing (our) generosity" and thanked us for being part of their day and for being in their lives. Also included was a tiny picture of the couple. There were fewer than 100 guests at the wedding, so the couple were not overwhelmed with thank-you notes to write. The groom's parents are great friends of ours, and we gave the gift to them prior to the wedding, but we're now left wondering: Did the couple actually get the gift and know it was from us? Do I say something to the groom's parents, and if so, how do I tactfully say this? I would hate to think that this is the new trend among young brides. Thankfully, I know three recent young brides who were very prompt with their notes and personalized

their messages. — *Confused in Connecticut*

Dear Confused: They probably received your gift; they just never got their manners. There's no real tactful way to speak to the groom's parents about this issue, so I would just let it go. As a poet wrote nearly 1,000 years ago, "the test of good manners is to be patient with the bad ones."

Brand-new newlyweds: Please handwrite your thank-you notes. It's easier to deal with a cramped hand for a day than guests feeling slighted for years.

Dear Annie: The letter from "Still-Grieving Parent" could have been written by me a couple of years ago, but thanks to the certified grief counselor at Hope Hospice, I've come a long way. Losing a child is the hardest thing any parent could ever deal with, and we are entitled to that grief.

That does not give us permission to expect other people involved to feel the exact same way we do or act exactly as we do. "Still-Grieving Parent" is

being selfish to expect her son-in-law to choose being alone for the duration of her personal grieving period. If she loved her daughter, she would respect that her daughter would want someone she loved to get on with his life. We all know that no one can ever take the place of our children, but it is different when you lose a spouse. I know that, too.

She should continue with private counseling but should also seek out a group of parents who have lost adult children. I still grieve after three years, but I can enjoy a happy relationship with my daughter-in-law, her new husband and their family, including the two extra grandkids. It cannot replace my son, but when I look at how much his children have achieved, it shows me I did the right thing by not interfering. — *Been There, Done That*

Dear Been: It's invaluable to hear the perspective of someone who has lived through this and come out the other side. I believe you're right that I was too hard on the son-in-law in my response to "Still-Grieving Parent." Spouses grieve in different ways. It should not be taken as disrespectful.

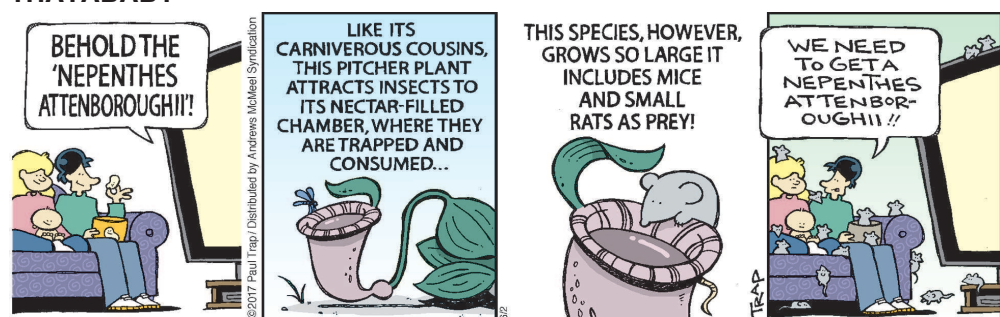


Annie Lane
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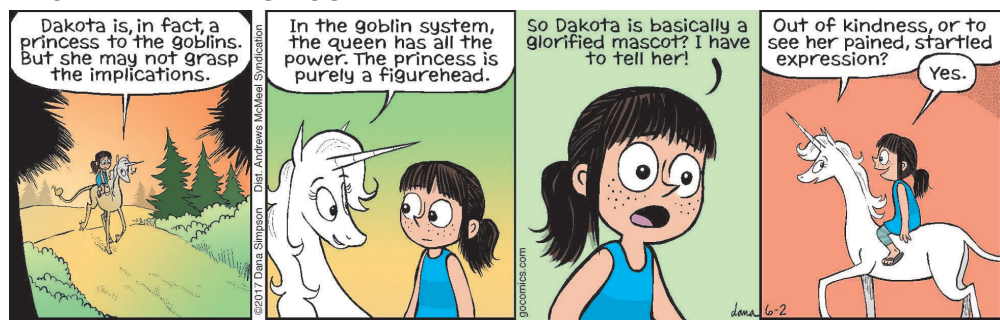
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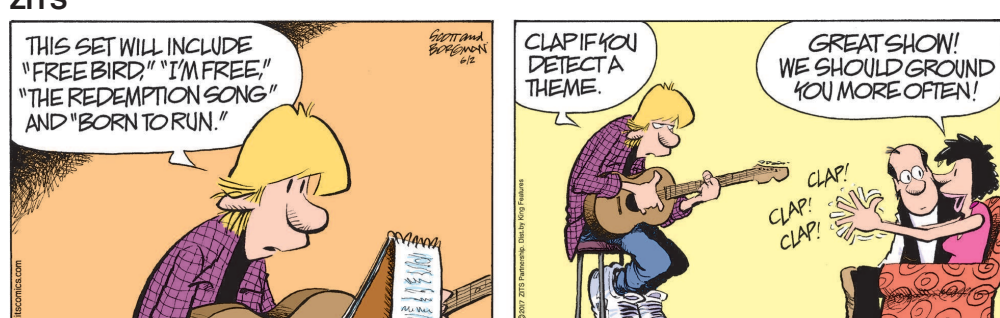
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TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Learning about another person will be a hit-and-miss process; the misses teach you as much as the hits. Soon you'll read the other person with more clarity and be smoother in your interactions, too.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). One of the ways your mind works to defend and protect you is to blur your memory of the bad stuff and make the good stuff glitter in your review. That's why it's good to write things down today — a reality check for later.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Life won't push you into anything. But if you can't find a reason to stay, that's a pretty good reason to go. So push yourself. The adventures don't exist until you create them. Take the steps. Answer the call.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). On days like today, it feels somehow more crucial to get the right kind of attention. Bottom line: Don't spend time with people who make you feel more alone than you do when you're alone.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Unrequited love is easier to get past than once-requested love because it doesn't involve a process of wondering what went wrong. You've been on both sides of this, so you'll have compassion for the one who pines for you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It may be a fight to hang on, but it shouldn't be a fight to let go. Letting go is easy. It doesn't require any special skill or strength. Letting go is simply a decision. Open your hands.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're open and ready to connect with new and old friends. Your engagement with what's around you brings people closer. Your smile tells them it's OK to talk to you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Looking back, the bad feelings are what led you to create a better life. That's why you don't automatically shy away from things that have the potential to be unpleasant if they also might lead to your growth.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You may feel as though you have to be twice as good as the others in order to get half of what they have (and you're not wrong about that). Don't take it personally; it's just a function of being new and paying dues.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There are those who don't have as much natural empathy as you do. Then there are those who have it but don't act on it: They'll be feeling this later. For now, stick near the big-hearted friends. They've much to offer!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Part of the fun of new relationships is fantasizing about what they might turn into. Enjoy the dreams of what may be. Soon enough you'll come to a mature understanding of reality.

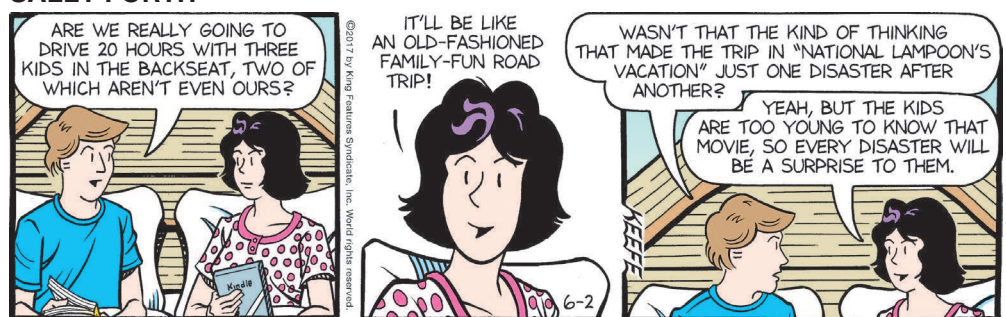
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). To befriend the ones who are naturally a part of your daily life takes an average amount of spiritual generosity. To go out of your way to befriend someone — that's for the spiritually advanced, which you are!

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (June 3). Your best supporters will push you, not pressure you. Correct and worthy goals come with their own power source — a jetpack of motivation. So while you'll need help in the beginning, once you lift off, you'll keep it until you get to the destination. Relationships will be sweet, especially now and November. Cancer and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 20, 11, 15 and 27.

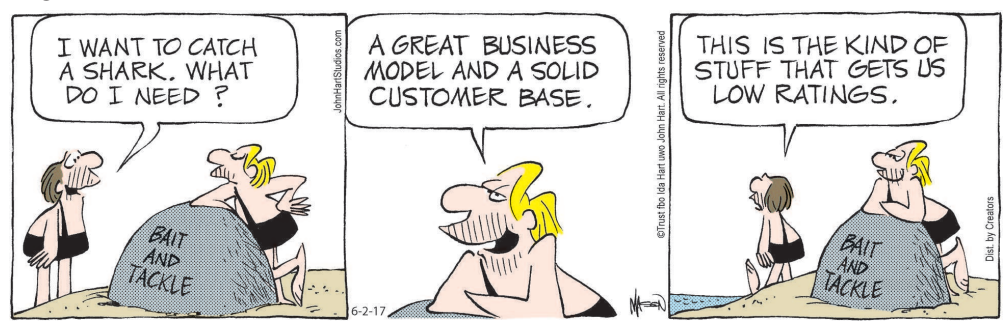
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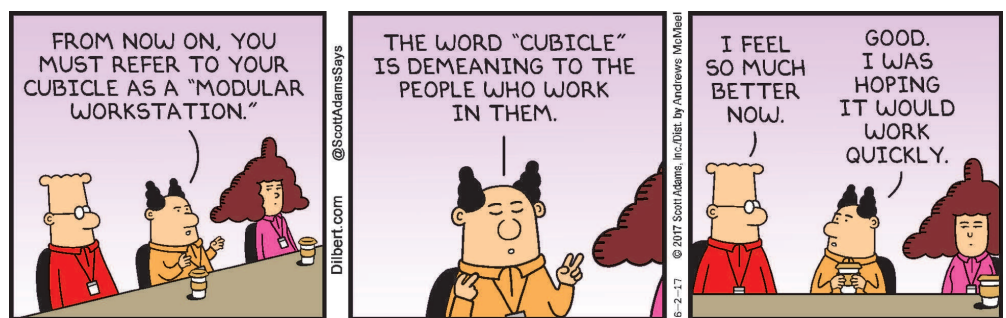
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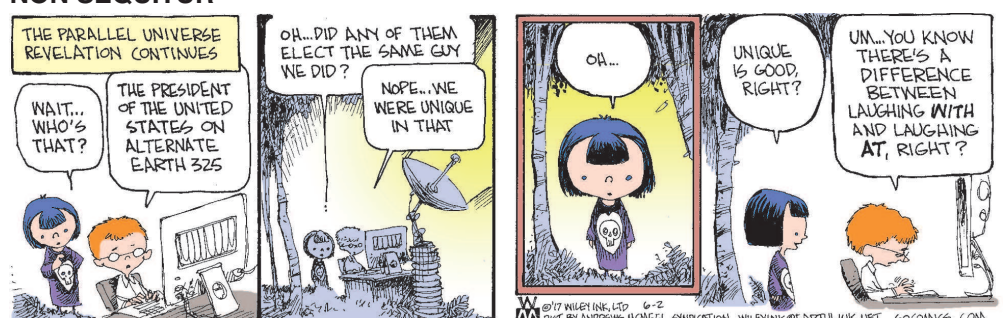
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