

The help isn't enough

Dear Annie: I feel torn and guilty that I'm not doing enough to take care of my mom. My stepdad and I are the only ones taking care of my mom, who needs daily assistance. I thank the Lord for my stepdad every day. I have a sister and brother, but they don't visit often. I've spent 4 1/2 days every other week with my mom and stepdad since I retired. I also have a part-time job. Today when I left, Mom asked when I'll be back. I told her I'll be there again in two weeks. She said that is too long. How do I handle my guilt that I'm not doing enough? — *Daughter*

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Dear Daughter: The best way to handle your guilt is to keep a healthy perspective, knowing that you are doing your best — and your best sounds pretty darn good to me. As a caretaker, your own self-care is extremely important. For resources to this end, visit the Family Caregiver Alliance website at <https://www.caregiver.org> or call 800-445-8106.

Secondly, if you haven't asked your brother and sister to pitch in more by at least visiting on a semi-regular basis, now is the time. Perhaps they've gotten used to your taking care of everything and aren't aware of how extreme the situation has gotten. Tell them that Mom is lonely and would love some company. Also, some insurance plans (including some Medicare and Medicaid plans) cover hospice care, so that's an option worth exploring.

Please know that you are doing a great job, and your mom raised a truly compassionate soul.

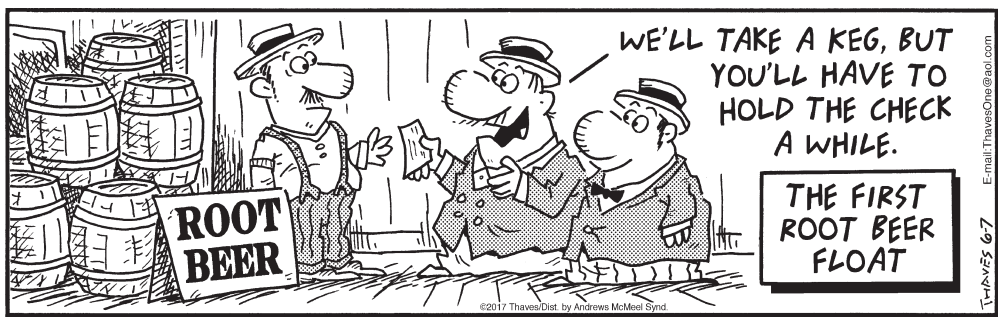
Dear Annie: My parents always told me that if someone helps you out, you help that person in return. Some people in my family think you should help everyone and not expect anything in return. For example, sometimes my brother "Carson" works on our

half brother's car and doesn't charge him anything. I feel that's very charitable. Carson just tells him that if he helps him out sometime, he'll call it even. But if our half brother won't help do anything, is that right? I feel those types of people are using people. What are your thoughts? — *D.D.*

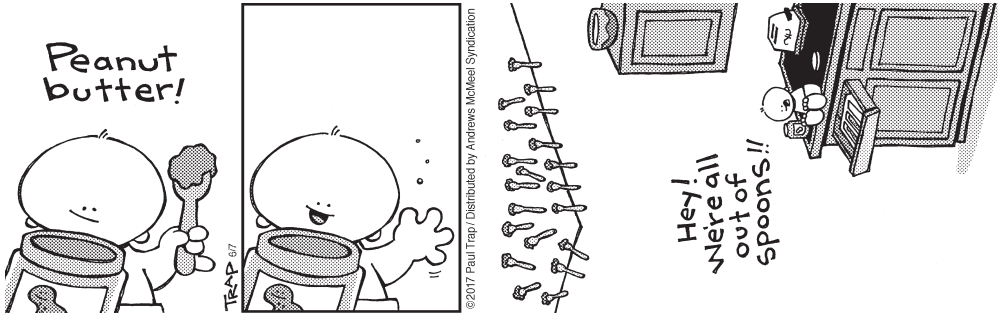
Dear D.D.: Lending a helping hand to someone in need is always a good thing, unless the person you are helping begins to get your hands dirty. What I mean by that is that if you feel you are being taken advantage of, then you should stop, but if you don't mind helping, then you should continue. It sounds as if Carson doesn't mind helping out your half brother and hopes the favor will be returned one day but also isn't too concerned about ensuring that it's paid back. That's a healthy attitude. I've found that what goes around truly does come around, though often not in the form we're expecting.

"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." — *Mother Teresa*

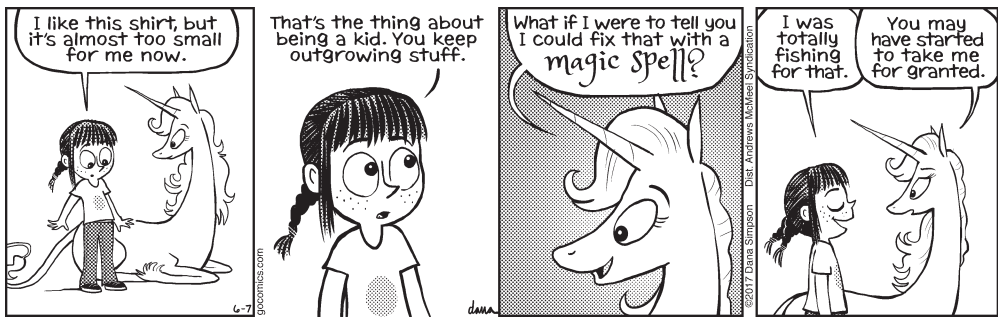
FRANK AND ERNEST



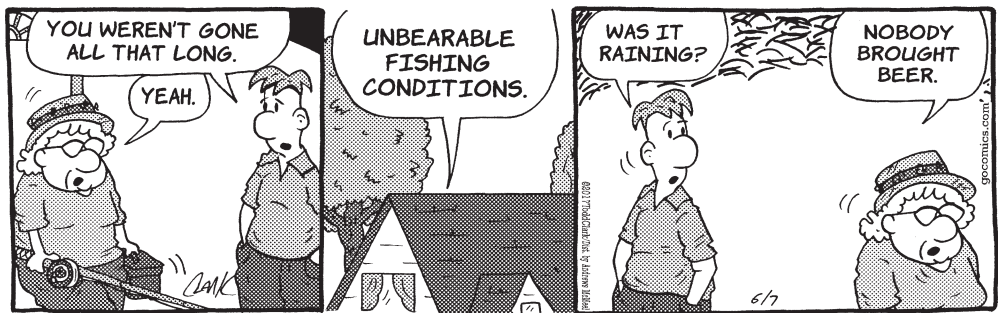
THATABABY



PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



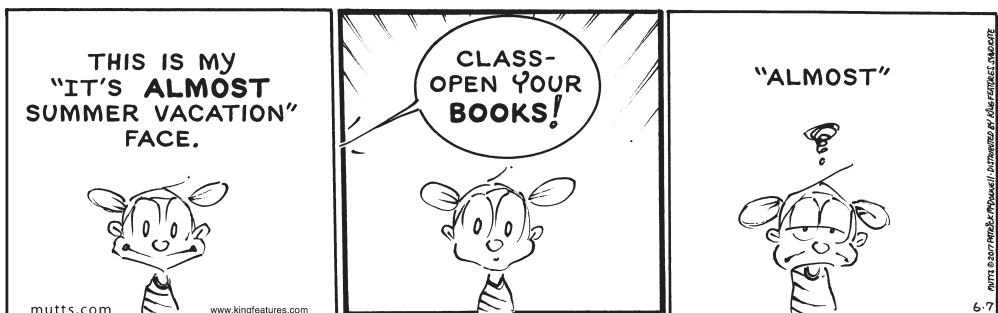
LOLA



SIX CHIX



MUTTS



BABY BLUES



ZITS



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The fact of the matter is that when things come too easily, they are not enjoyed nearly as much as what was hard-won. Though you'd like to give freely to someone, consider making the exchange slightly more challenging.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). All that you desire for this day will be accomplished, because you commit, buckle down, and work until it's finished. "Freedom" isn't even on your list of values right now, and this will work just fine.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The science-fiction writer William Gibson suggested that the future is here; it just isn't widely distributed yet. Nonetheless, you're on the inside track and you'll enjoy the technological perks of the elite.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Good leaders have clear rules enforced with consistency. People need to know the reward or punishment for each action and they need to believe those consequences are every time and for all.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Art will imitate life, and life will imitate art to the extent that it might get a little confusing about what's real and what's a copy. All you have to do is check in with your heart's authenticity meter to know.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The ego acts in mysterious ways. It can make us feel superior, but it can also persuade us of our inferiority. Both ideas are wrong. If either idea is influencing an action, it's a sign of ego interference. Pause. Back up. Reassess.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Something rare and a little magical is coming together. This involves people you love and people you will love all showing up at the same time and place to celebrate.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Since you're not 3 years old, you don't always say what pops into your head. Instead you try to cater your message to your audience. You most adore those around whom you least have to self-censor.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Personal growth and empowerment will involve a bit of scrutiny directed at your inner dialogue. There's a chance that something you've been telling yourself is a falsehood you concocted to protect yourself.

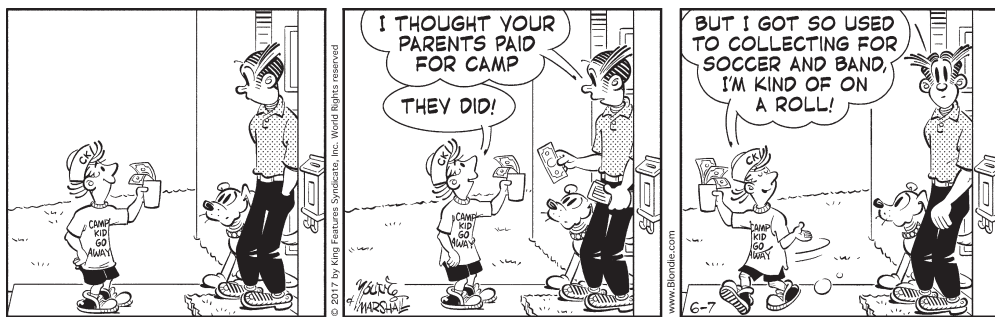
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Many religions suggest that the ancestors are always there, ready to help, if we would only call on them. Why wait for a big problem to test the theory? No one will be put out if you ask for help with something small.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Those who would rather be right than be happy, peaceful or wealthy have definitely fallen prey to the illogic of an out-of-control ego. Your willingness to be wrong isn't a sign of weakness; it's a sign of health.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Amateurs go on about themselves for 10 minutes before bothering to inquire about the other person. Even when you've something to vent, you make sure the conversation is balanced — one of the reasons you're so popular.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (June 8). This year you put health and happiness first and are able to achieve more than ever because of this intelligent prioritizing. You'll learn much as a part of a team. There's a chance to commit to a short-term relationship that you'll have the option to take long-term later. September and December are the most romantic months this year. Cancer and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 4, 45, 15 and 26.

BLONDIE



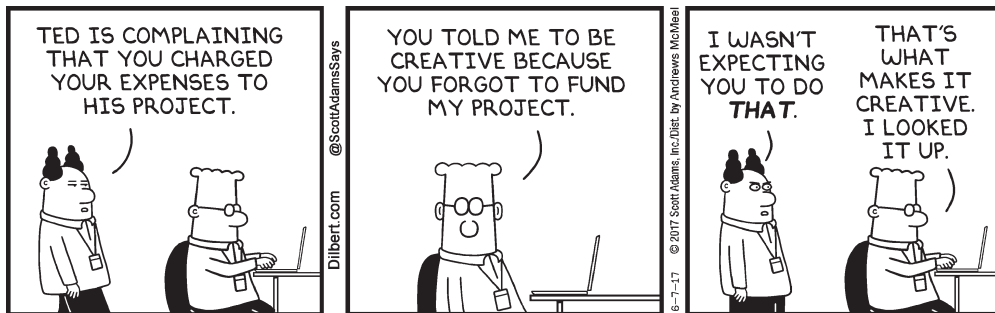
SALLY FORTH



B.C.



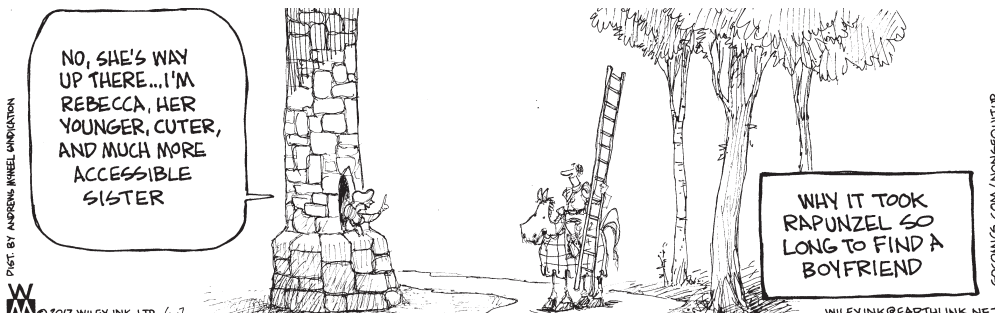
DILBERT



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WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

