

Husband's friend is a gossip

Dear Annie: I need advice on how to deal with my husband's friend. This person is a gossip who delves into the details of other people's personal lives. He entertains groups with these unflattering stories and makes himself important by offering his analyses, judging their life choices, misdeeds and daily activities. Family, friends, acquaintances and anyone in the public eye are subject to his scrutiny. He can be quite charming while he's being friendly with you during his "information gathering" stage, but he has hurt many people and tarnished their reputations. He is a bully and a poor role model.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

He claims to be religious and caring, but I find his behavior intrusive and offensive. He questions my husband about our family activities on a daily basis. I have told my husband and this person that this is unacceptable. I try hard to avoid him. Why are some people such gossip-mongers? — *Fed Up by This Octopus*

Dear Fed Up: You're smart to stay out of his toxic tentacles' reach. I'm surprised this man still has friends at all. If someone gos-

sips about anyone not in the room, you know whom he'll be talking about just as soon as you're out the door. Let's hope your husband will put that together in time and cut ties with this man.

Below is a poem called "Nobody's Friend" (author unknown), which several readers have shared with me since I started writing this column and which I think is worth sharing here:

"My name is Gossip.
I have no respect for justice.
I maim without killing.
I break hearts and ruin lives.

"I am cunning and malicious and gather strength with age.

"The more I am quoted the more I am believed.

"I flourish at every level of society.

"My victims are helpless.

"They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name and no face.

"To track me down is impossible.

"The harder you try, the more elusive I become.

"I am nobody's friend.

"Once I tarnish a reputation, it is never the same.

"I topple governments and ruin marriages.

"I ruin careers and cause sleepless nights, heartache and indigestion.

"I spawn suspicion and generate grief.

"I make innocent people cry in their pillows.

"Even my name hisses.

"I am called Gossip."

Dear Annie: As someone who's been a recovered alcoholic for nearly 10 years, I agree with your advice to "Margaret," who was contemplating staying with the alcoholic who recently tried assaulting her daughter. (You told her to "run, not walk, away from this man.")

If he is serious about getting help, he will make new friends in recovery. Alcoholics Anonymous will accept him with open arms.

If, however, he is not committed to changing, it is much better to be nowhere near him because he is likely to commit even worse offenses. — *SL*

Dear SL: Thanks for speaking to the situation from personal experience. I hope Margaret, as well as anyone else in her shoes, takes it to heart.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Your most useful tool of the day will be an easy social demeanor and a genuine desire to help people. It bears mentioning that helping people can be tricky. Sometimes you help them best by not helping.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Logic dictates that the best choice is an educated one made after careful examination of the options. Life will prove to you otherwise. Dumb luck can prove brilliant. A whim or inkling can lead you somewhere astounding.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You know what it's like to land right in the sweet, gooey center of your joy. You also know what it's like to drift out from that, which isn't all bad. There's clarity in the drift. Today, you'll appreciate all sides of it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You were not meant for a zombie mindset — you're far too alive for that. It's better to do absolutely nothing than to fill your hours with hollow distraction. Meaningless things cause you to forget who you are.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Infatuation is an exhilarating, addicting drug that produces an often lovely and very temporary false reality. To minimize the side effects, depend on a grounded and unaffected friend as a guide.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Genuine compliments will have you buzzing with the delicious charge that often accompanies social acceptance. Phony compliments will do the same. The only difference between the two is the intent of the one making the compliment.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Trying to do too much today will lead to stressful feelings of inadequacy. Cut your list in half. You'll get the same amount accomplished but you'll feel

terrific about it instead.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). An ambitious mood can be the enemy of realistic goals, but go with how you're feeling anyway. You're mature enough to find the real equilibrium between big dreams and the real life.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). One way to maximize your contacts is to serve them as well as you can and use them only to the extent that you can very easily repay. People who lean too hard on their network may find it is not as robust as they thought.

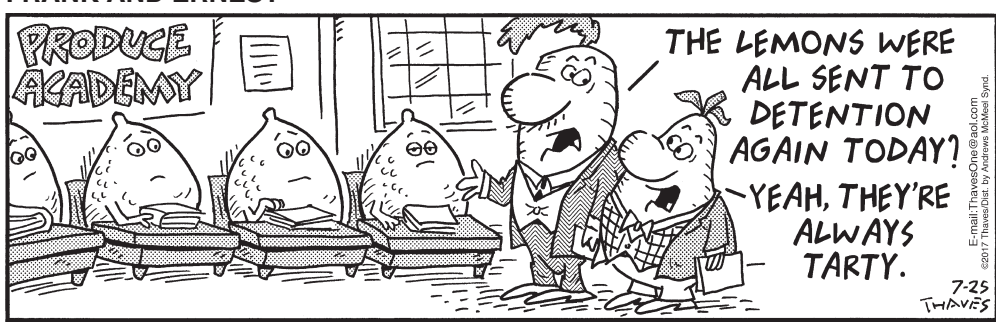
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It is your quest to constantly grow and improve. But growing things do not always appear to be getting taller or larger. Rest and recovery is an essential part of the growth process and not to be skipped.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Good information will lead you to make arrangements that benefit all. The best tips will initially seem frivolous or even useless. That's your genius. You think playfully.

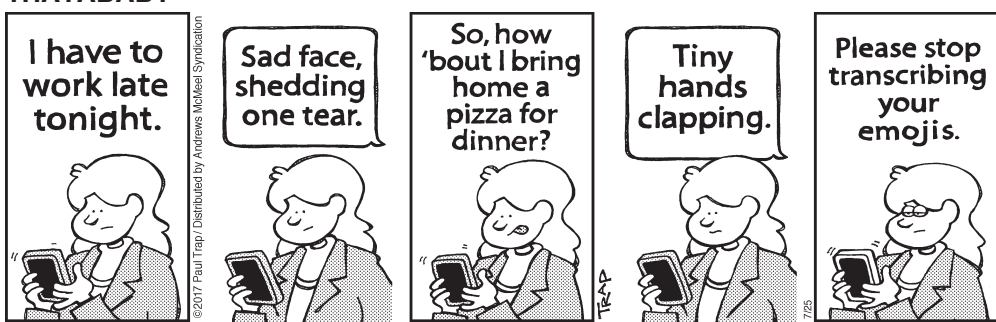
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You are modest and accommodating, but it won't fool the wise. Smart people sense your gravitas and will think of you as an equal partner and a like mind.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (July 26). You'll cultivate beautiful surroundings, starting with the people you hang out with. You'll grow your internal resources through education and personal development and your external resources multiply, too. August brings exciting possibilities to your love life. Increased comfort and security will be the hallmarks of 2018. Scorpio and Aries adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 11, 19, 40 and 30

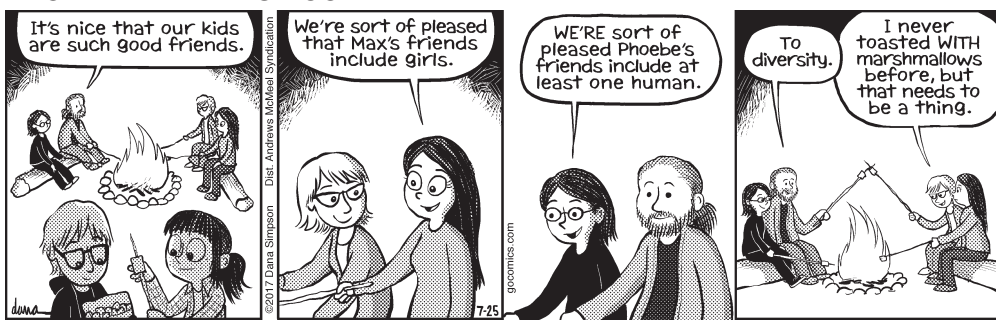
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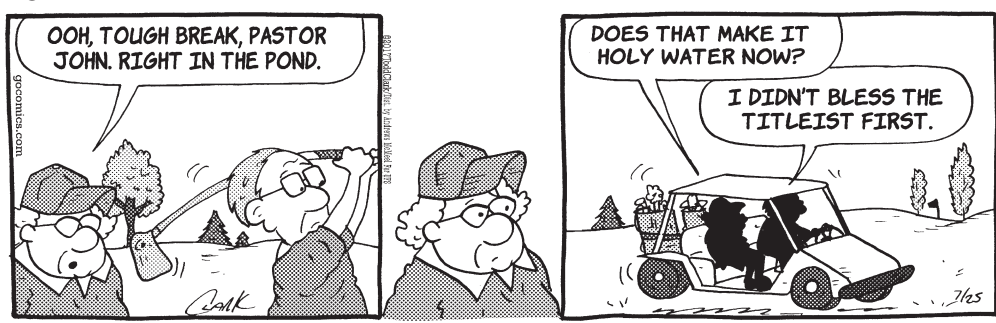
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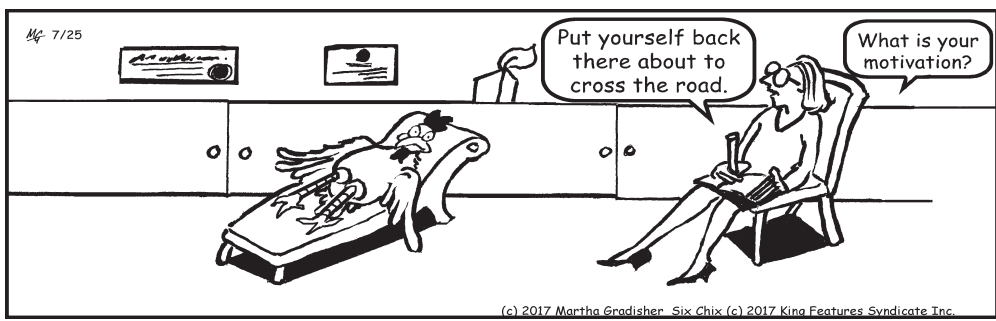
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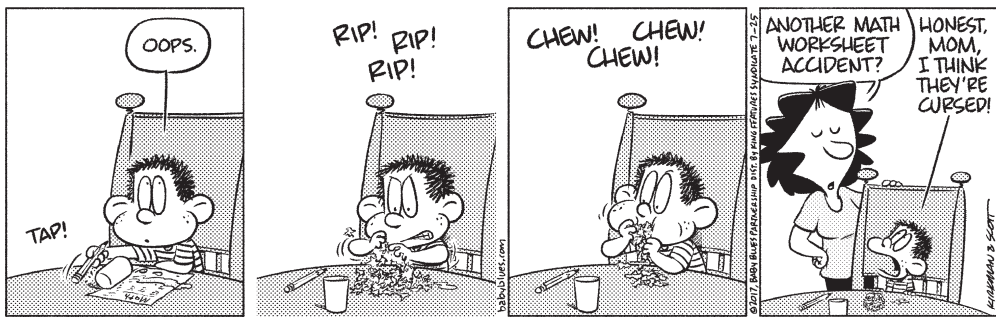
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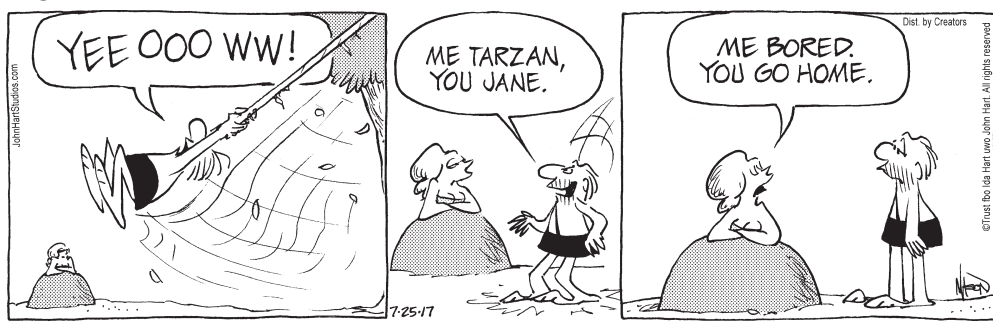
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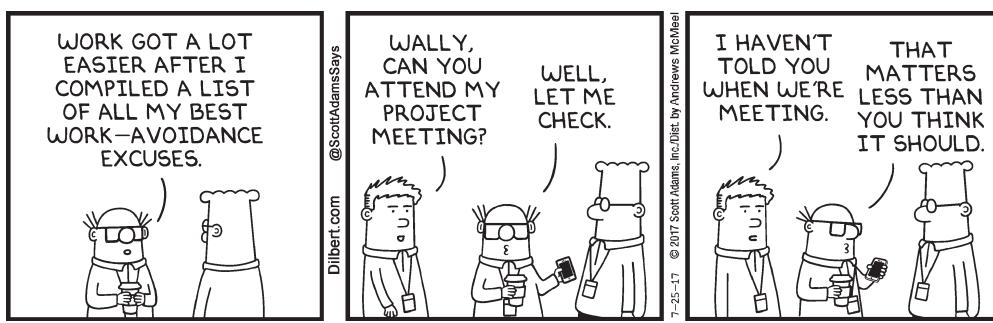
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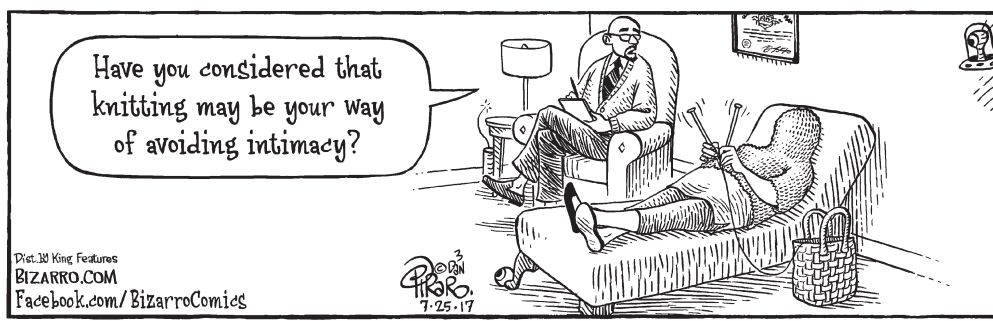
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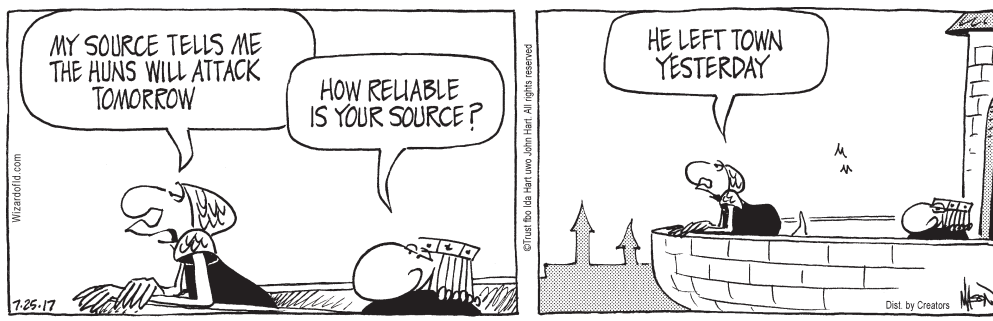
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