

Being all that we can be

Dear Annie: Being 76 years old and in the twilight of my life, I have truly "been there, done that" in so many ways. I have seen much, done much and still search for much. I give thanks to all those who have helped and empowered me over my lifespan. I give thanks to all those on whose backs and shoulders I have stood all this time. Only in America could have I been so blessed and fortunate in receiving all my gifts of love, laughter and life.

I still see America as being "half full," rather than "half empty." America is still great, because she has an innate strength and enduring stamina to heal her bruises and cleanse her wounds. America is still great, because she steadfastly promotes optimism and assertively overcomes pessimism. America is still great, because she indefatigably promotes inspiration and consistently defeats alienation.

I firmly believe that most Americans want what is best for our fellow citizens and our country: fairness, opportunity, responsibility, education, respect, equal-

ity, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We are all in this together. Yes, we can overcome the hate, racism, greed, selfishness, anger and fear. Let us come together and be all that we can be. We can do this, for America is (still) the greatest! — *John, Retired Sergeant Major of the U.S. Marine Corps*

Dear John: I hear from so many people who have had falling-outs with family members over politics in recent years. If more of us adopted your radiant optimism, perhaps we could brighten the times and bring people back together. Thank you, sir, for your service and your wisdom.

Dear Annie: I've never written to an advice column, but here goes nothing. I have to envy "Too Fast for Me," who has so many close couple friends. My husband and I really don't have any. The last time a couple asked "just us" over was more than four years ago.

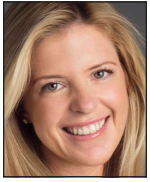
We moved to our current town for school several years ago

and then stayed for work. We're now in our 60s and seem to be ignored by everyone. The people I worked with were 20 years younger and now I don't hear from them. My church members live 15 miles away and several have rebuffed my efforts at friendship. We have only a little money for entertainment. I'm also a part-time freelance writer, an isolating, frustrating occupation. Sometimes I feel downright lonesome. — *Lonely in Virginia*

Dear Lonely in Virginia: Making friends is hard for most of us. People are generally so wrapped up in their own lives that it doesn't occur to them to reach out. Don't think this is a reflection of some defect you have. It's just human nature.

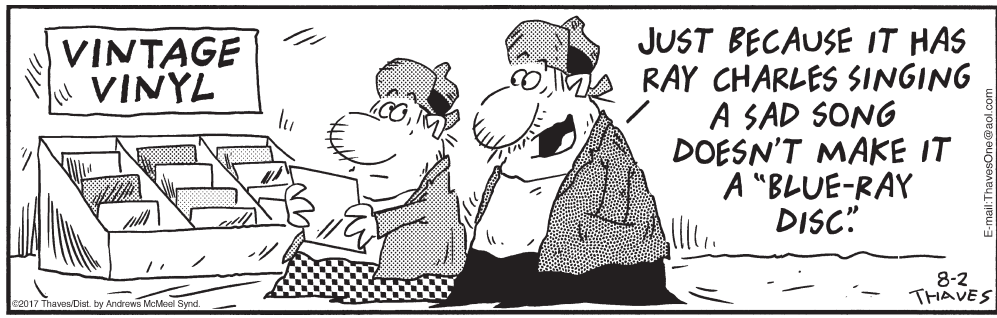
Double your efforts. Check out Meetup, a website that connects local people around shared interests — hiking, reading, knitting and thousands of other activities. Volunteer somewhere. Do anything that gets you out of the house and socializing and taking a break from a seemingly solitary life. And to that last point: I know how isolating the work of a writer can be. You might feel lonely, but you're not alone.

DEAR ANNIE

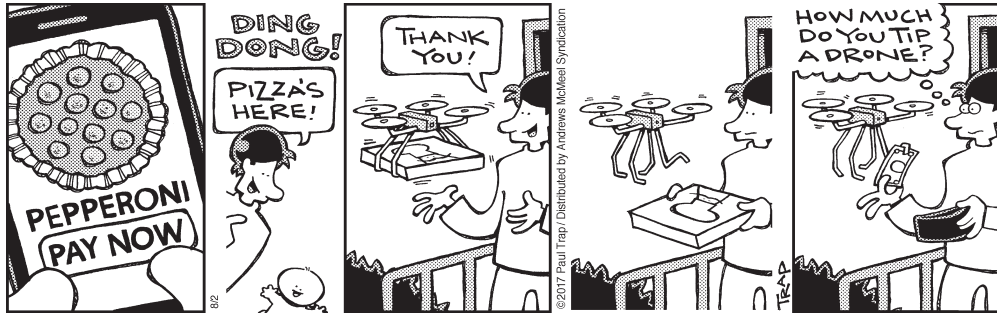


Annie Lane
Creators
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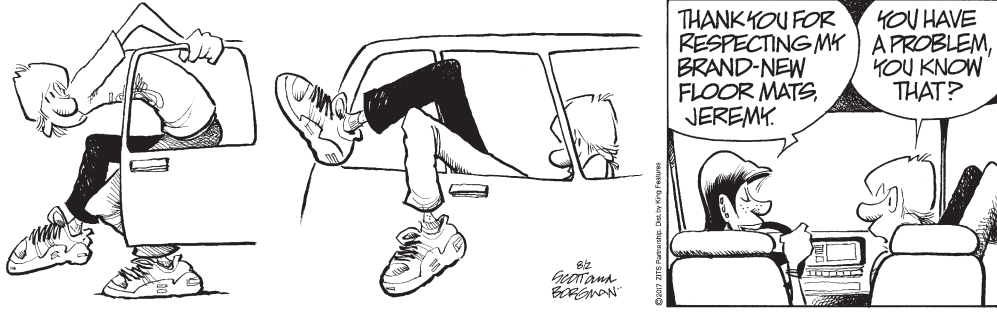
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TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Your strengths are powerful, so don't obsess over your weaknesses. Manage them instead. Find a workaround for whatever gets in the way of your excellence. Your trajectory will be a slow upward climb.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're highly motivated by the intrinsic satisfaction of accomplishing your work, and the ancillary prizes, while interesting, have little to do with that drive of yours. You're an emotional asset to the group and a moneymaker too.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). So you've killed a few plants. That doesn't make you a plant killer. There are those who think in extremes. Think more reasonable than they. One example is never a big enough sample pool to make a rule out of.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). What do you do when the cream of the crop turns out to be skimmed milk? Just keep cooking. Anyway, this no-frills version of the recipe will be a lot healthier for you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). When you put more effort into creating and nurturing a relationship, love will be abundantly (but perhaps not immediately) there for you. These things take time to grow.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). People want the inside story from you, if you're willing to share it. Your personal experience is much more valuable than anything that can be looked up on the internet.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You see how beautiful people are when they cannot seem to see it in themselves. Your role will be to give them a clue but not to try and convince them. That won't work. People have to go at their own pace.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). When you get what you're pursuing you're going to feel the same way about yourself as you do now. This is why it's important to get on great terms with yourself. Check in. What would improve the you-to-you relationship today?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Your ideas about who you are and where you're going will be consistently in line with the group's. There's a shared set of values here, along with common goals and similar methods for getting there. You'll get there together.

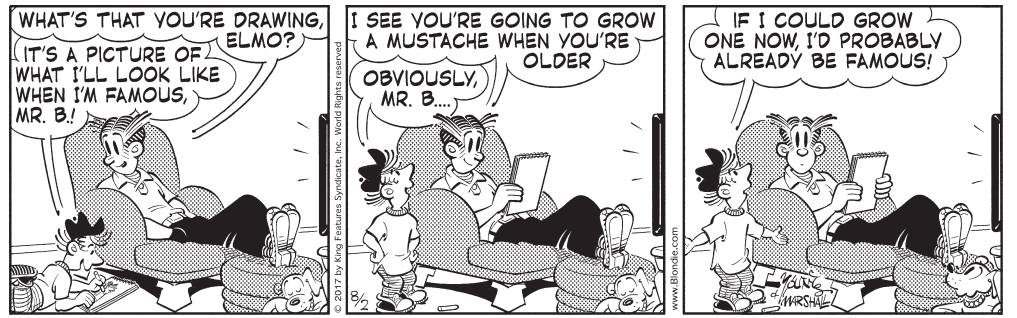
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). When you're giving love that can't be felt and is instead turned back on you, this is not your fault. Those who do not love themselves will find something wrong with anyone who loves them.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). It's a day to set personal boundaries, if only to prove that you can. Without boundaries you'll agree to do things that you don't want to do and then be unhappily looking for opportunities to get back at the one who "put" you in that position.

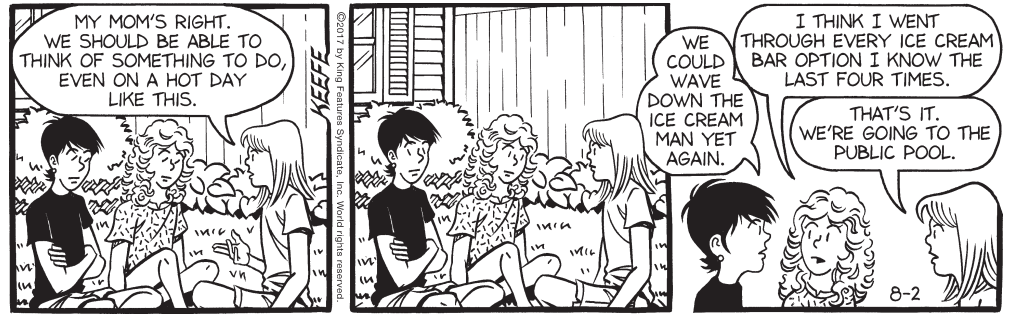
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). If it doesn't have the potential for a little pain, it's not really a risk. But no risk means no thrill. Anyway, you'd much rather do something new and mess it up than repeat part of the mildly satisfying past.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Aug. 3). This solar return sees you become a master. The talent that's necessary to be a master is one of attraction. The master is more attracted to the subject than others and is thus willing to try harder, make more attempts and experience more failures. The way to mastery is persistence. Virgo and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 22, 28, 31 and 18.

BLONDIE



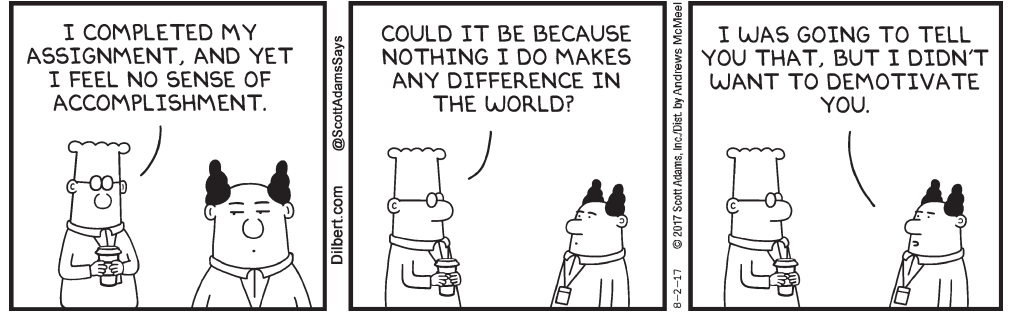
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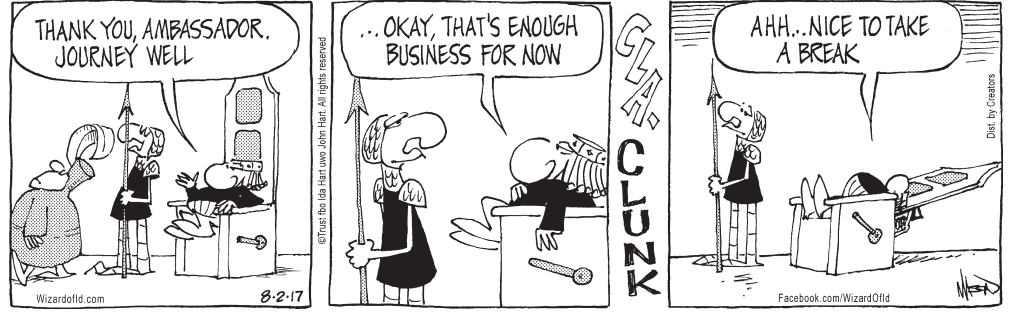
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