

Friend lacks follow-through

Dear Annie: After college, I moved across the country to New York City. Coming from a small university, only a few friends moved to the big city with me, and we took very different career paths. However, I felt OK about the move because one of my best friends from college, "Olivia," was coming with me.

We used to hang out quite a bit, but as the years have passed, we only manage to see each other once or twice a year. I get it. We developed our own niches and friend groups. But what really grates my cheese is when Olivia messages me every month or so to generically say that she misses me or that we should really hang out. We have fun when we see each other and reminisce, so usually I agree and offer up a few ideas for a gathering — grabbing coffee, visiting a new workout studio, whatever I'm up to that week. No response. The radio silence typically lasts until the next monthly message — "miss you!" When she does respond, it's usually just to say how she's busy but that she'll try to make the next one. Each

time she flakes, my fond college memories become less fond.

Annie, I've accepted that Olivia isn't reliable, but I don't want to cut her out of my life completely. How should I deal with this? — *Flake's Friend*

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Dear Flake's Friend: No matter which way you slice it, flakiness is frustrating. Canceling plans once or twice is understandable. Life happens; things come up. But Olivia seems to have made this into a monthly ritual. And I'd guess the purpose of this ritual, for her, is to alleviate some guilt. "I'm not a bad friend," she can tell herself. "I reach out."

But good friends hold each other accountable. That's what you need to do here. The next time she texts you, tell her you love her but she's got to stop saying she wants to see you and then not following through. After you've called attention to her bad habit, it will be much harder for her to keep doing it with a clean conscience. Instead, she'll have to make plans only when she plans on following through, as adults are supposed to.

Dear Annie: I read your column from prison, where I'm serving an eight-year sentence for attempted kidnapping and home invasion, done while I was in a state of cocaine psychosis. Next week, I'll have five years of total sobriety. I've done a lot of work on myself, including earning college credits and participating in Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and Victim Offender Education Group.

I'm writing in response to the recent letter you printed from "Margaret," who said her ex-partner attempted to sexually assault her daughter while he was intoxicated. I was taken aback by your calling her ex's actions "unforgivable." You do know that when you forgive someone, you do it more for yourself than for the person you're forgiving, right? And what of all the offenders in our nation who are in need of forgiveness to help them heal? Are they incapable of changing, throwaway people?

Maybe I read too much into this. It's just that this unforgiving attitude is part of the grease that enables the generational cycles of violence and abuse to keep revolving. — *Chris B.*

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). There's a difference between voluntary distractions and involuntary distractions. Television, refrigerator, social media — these are voluntary. People are involuntary ones. Go where people are not, or you'll get very little accomplished.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You know what you want to do but have no idea how you're going to do it. The library and the internet are excellent first stops. Also, start telling people. Everyone will want to help you today.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're up to the challenge and ready for the responsibilities that go with it, but there's only so much you can do alone. As you reach out for help, use your intuitive powers, but don't forget to check credentials as well.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Your productivity will be impressive today as you follow this single suggestion: High-energy times are for creative and challenging work; low-energy times are for busy work.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Your good intentions are there. Your goals are sound. And your desire is strong. It's still not going to work, though, unless you can back it up with a system. Your efforts are best put toward creating and testing your system.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There's quite a lot you're not maximizing. You could be cashing in! You need to restructure. What makes it hard is that you haven't put the correct value on what you have, what you know and who you are. Get outsider help.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Some call it passion, but that's too mystical a term for the simple cause and effect that's really happening here. You find something to do that you

seem to be winning at, and your desire to do it increases. Success is an energizer.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). If you want to better yourself (and who doesn't?), there's only about 7 billion hours' worth of material available to you on the topic. You've a super talent for filtering the strategies that will work from the noise of general life.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A funny dichotomy: On the one hand you'd like to feel very attractive. On the other hand, you don't want people to actually be attracted to you, as that comes with its own set of problems. This is about self-love.

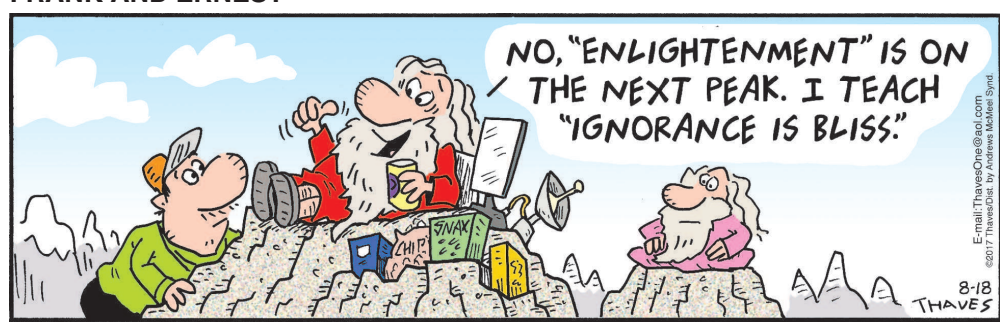
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The world is full of great ideas that aren't worthy of your time. Why? Because they aren't viable for you. It's not about finding the best idea; it's about working on what you can execute well. Focus all your energy on that.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Look for areas in which you might have a natural advantage. When you can apply your talent to a task or a relationship, you'll get the success bump that leads to high energy and more winning.

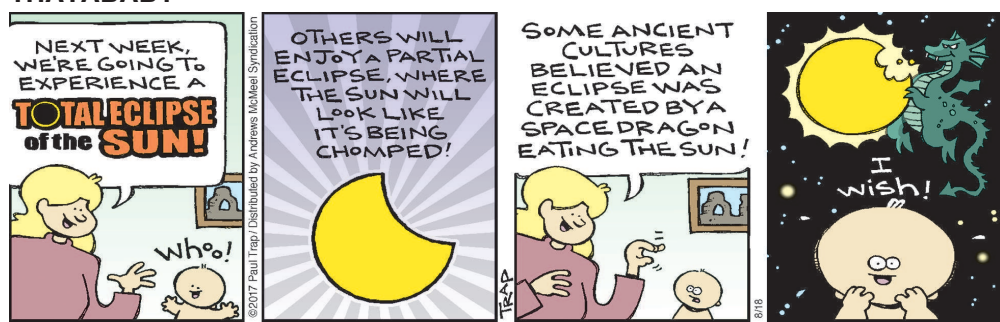
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Timing plays the starring role. People tend to think of timing as being related to luck, but it's often more of an experience and skill thing. Today you'll experiment, work and practice so that you can get the timing right.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Aug. 19). A lifestyle that allows you to do what you enjoy when you want it will allow for all kinds of good fortune. That's why it'll be wise for you to make flexibility a vital factor in any life decision. Scorpio and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 28, 13, 37 and 41.

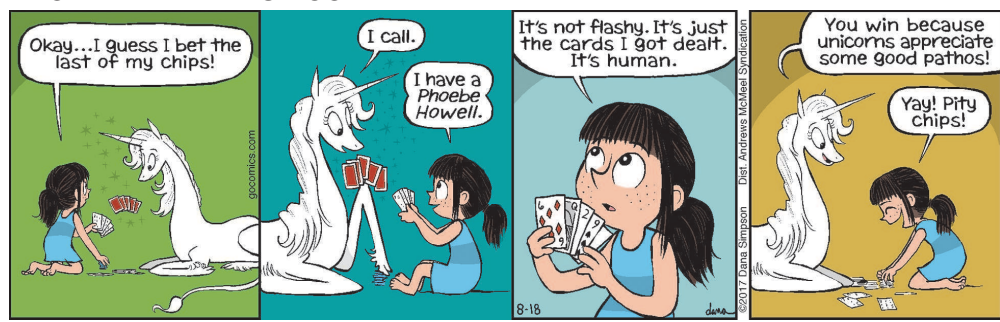
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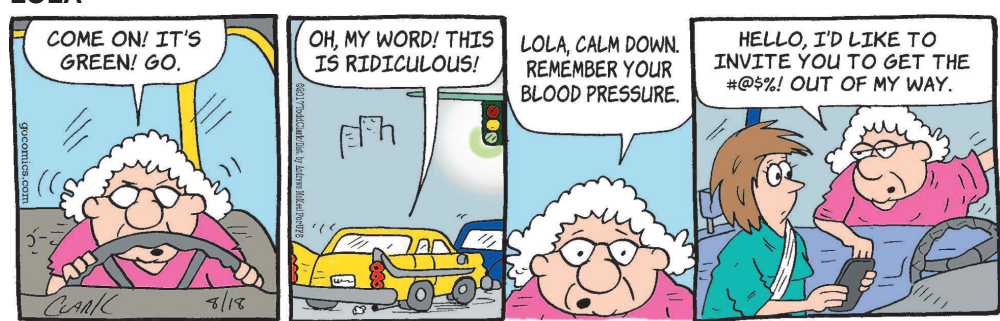
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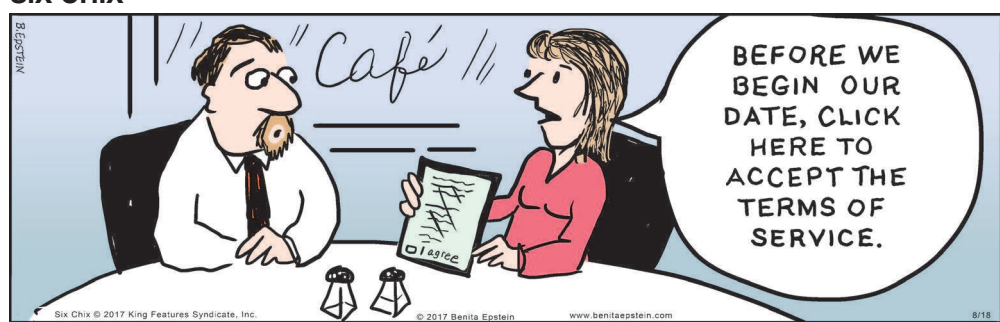
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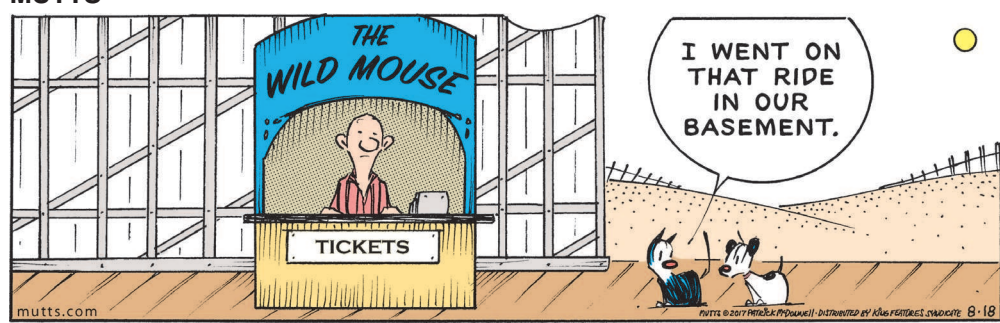
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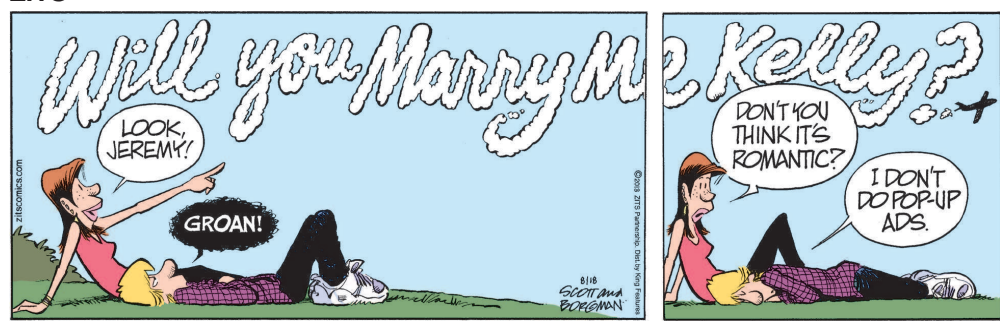
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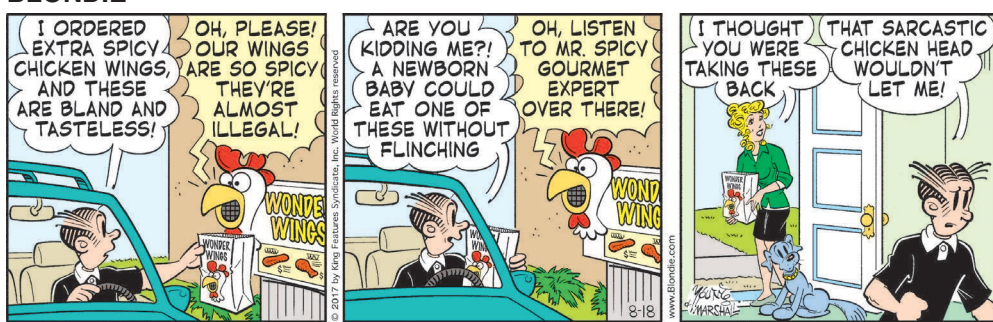
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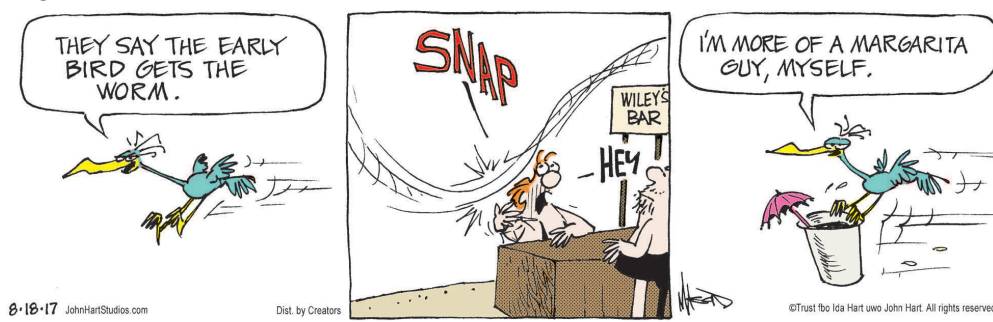
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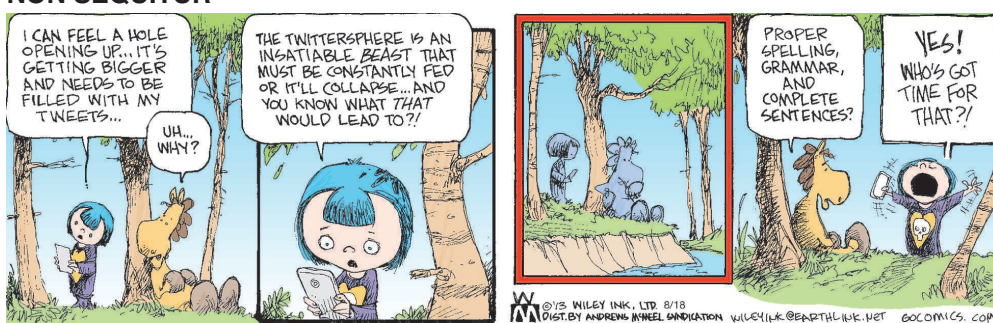
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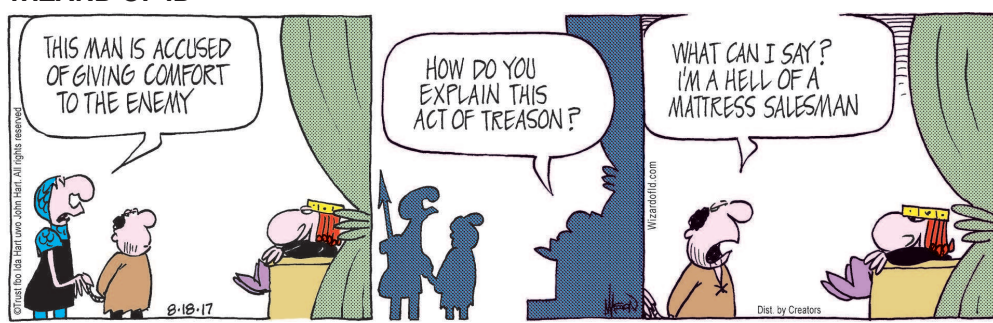
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