

# When family doesn't visit

**Dear Annie:** My husband and I are retired. We are in our 70s, and he is in poor health. He has cancer. But the problem I'm writing to you about is that he does not get visits or calls from his family on a regular basis unless he's in the hospital. They live in the same town as we do. When I was younger, my parents shamed me into visiting twice a month. I didn't mind, because it was the right thing to do. How do we approach this problem. Shame them? — *Looking for the Right Words*

**DEAR ANNIE**



Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

**Dear Looking:** Don't play the shame game. Be direct. It's possible his family members don't realize no one's calling or visiting; everyone may just assume another member of the family is staying in close touch. Tell them how much it would mean to your husband if they visited more often and not only when he's in the hospital. They're not just your husband's family; they're your family, too. And we all sometimes need family to remind us of what's important.

**Dear Annie:** My daughter and I had lunch today at a very nice pizza cafe we frequent. Three booths away were a couple and a boy of about 8 or 9. The woman started to berate the child. Apparently, she asked him to get a plate, and the plate was too small. She very loudly screamed, "How can you be so stupid to get such a small plate!" She went on and on. I walked by the booth, and both the boy and the man were staring silently at their plates. The woman continued for at least 15 minutes. She told him she was going to shave his head! The child began crying. It was such verbal abuse that I couldn't eat my food. Then the boy yelled, "I don't even want to be in this family!" Other diners began to notice. She finally left the restaurant, with the man and the boy trailing behind. What must this kid's life be like behind closed doors? I wanted to do something. I wanted to call the police; it was so horrible. Should I have spoken to her? — *Wish I Were With Child Protec-*

*tive Services*

**Dear WIWWCPS:** It's difficult to know what to do when witnessing such situations unfolding. The best course depends on the scenario. If it's merely an exasperated mom raising her voice at her child in the grocery, try to empathize. Every parent has been there, and in such moments of frustration, support can go much further than judgment. That might mean offering assistance (carrying groceries, cleaning up a spill, etc.) or just a sympathetic smile.

In more extreme situations, use caution. Experts recommend not confronting the parent yourself if you can avoid it. Instead, seek out a security guard or, in cases of physical abuse, call 911 and try to monitor the situation from a distance until authorities arrive. Take down the license plate number or other relevant information. If you find that you must intervene in the moment to protect the child's safety, proceed as gingerly as possible and try to be kind to the parent. That may sound counterintuitive, but it's the best way to de-escalate the situation.

## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Challenge yourself to leave a situation before you respond to it. Even if you're only walking away for five minutes, that's enough time to come up with a better communication than you'd have reflexively.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** There are interesting people out there you'd like to meet and equally interesting people who want to meet you. Your social efforts will pay off rather quickly now, so don't miss the chance to mingle.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** The No. 1 rule of the day: Don't agonize. You're creative, and to make the most of this you'll need to make many decisions and execute them fast. Take the lessons and move on — no regrets!

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** Like a real pro, you are brave without being reckless, focused but not oblivious to the competition. This attitude will carry you into an exclusive situation where you'll meet worthy opponents.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Maybe it won't do any good to explain yourself. Those who would understand don't need the explanation and those who don't only get more confused the more you talk.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** For those waiting for the one day when it will all just click in, you know better. There's no great light switch to turn on — not one gigantic click, but a ticker tape of small understandings you come to with daily awareness.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Those who are overly concerned with stating their personal truths are often too melodramatic for you to take seriously. Emotionally mature people put kindness, compassion and cooperation first.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** You can't tell what's going to make other people happy. You can't even tell what's going to make you happy. So just do your best. When things don't land quite right, shrug it off. And when they do, celebrate.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** The language of souls is hard for you to miss these days. As you listen past what people say out of a sense of social appropriateness, good manners or obligation, you hear the soul's cry.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** It's not just the supporters around you who are aware of your potential. Those who knock your confidence on purpose are also aware. You can take it as a compliment that they see you as competition.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** It's true that people have stumbled upon treasures like gold, but as for most of the better things in life, they cannot be found; they have to be assembled.

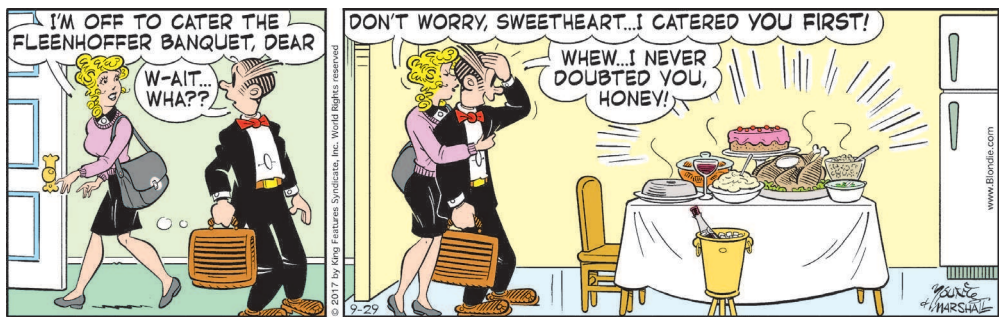
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Today, while going about normal business, you'll often be doing something very different in your head. You've a rich inner life. Your private world is only for you — though you may share glimpses with a trusted loved one.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Sept. 30).** It's a year of expanding options. The next three months are especially socially active. You're a quick study and also quite impressionable, so put yourself around good influences. You'll win a prize in January. This will be a game-changer. The love you share will feel as legendary as the stuff of poetry and song. Virgo and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 40, 44, 20 and 13.

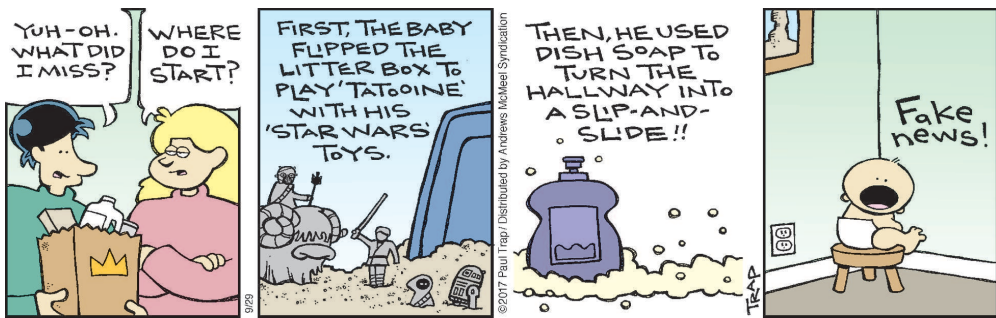
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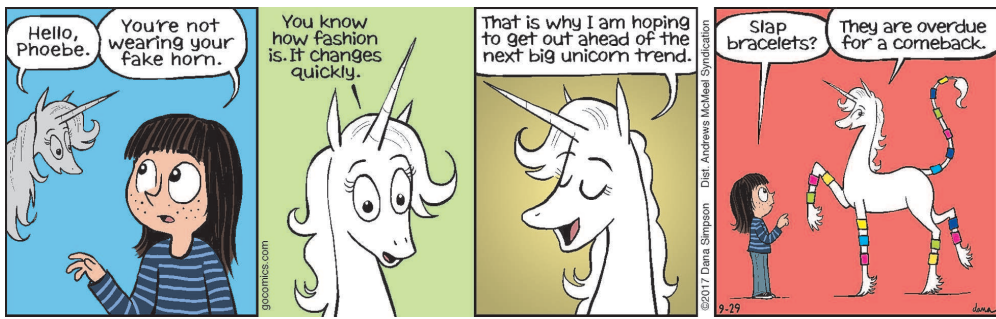
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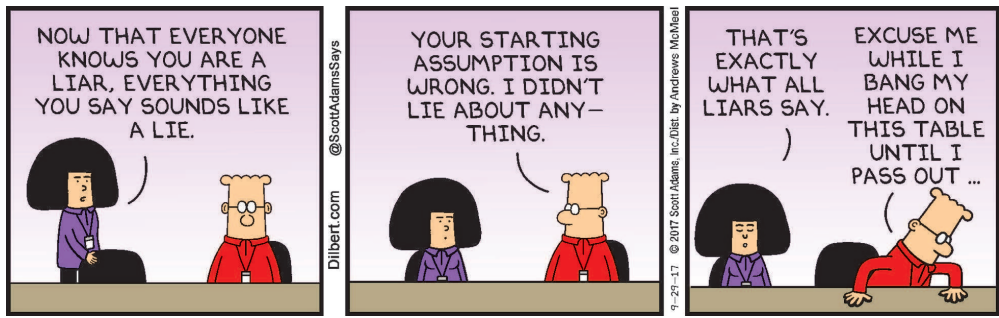
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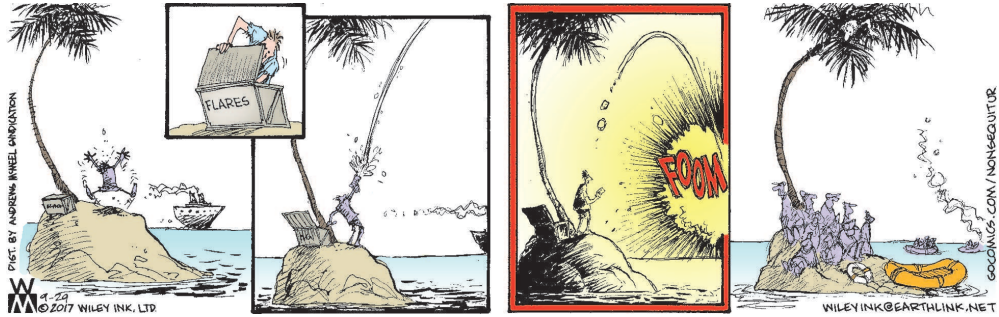
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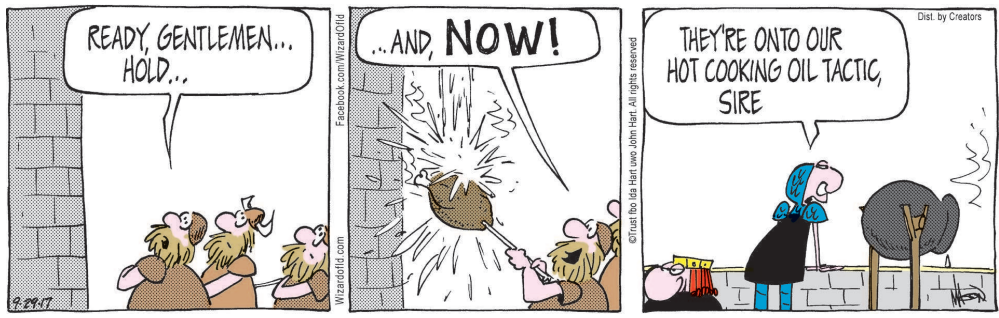
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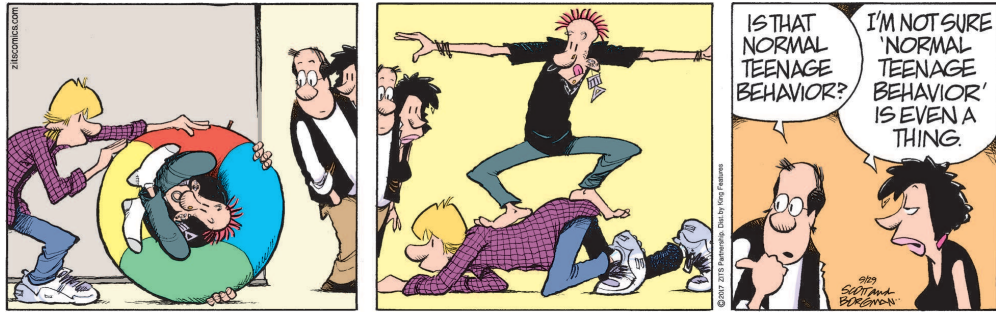
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**ROSE IS ROSE**

