

Sons's opinion upsets mom

Dear Annie: Just the other day, my son, "Ben," was talking to his stepdad, and he said some hurtful things about me — that I'm all about me, that it's always my way or the highway. I took that very personally. It made me cry. I never expected my eldest son to say something or feel that way about me. I took it as him trying to hurt my feelings. He needs to understand that with the kids all out of the house now, I do often feel that it is all about me. The house is empty; my two elder kids don't even call me to see whether I'm OK or sick, and I think that if I ever become sick, I will keep it to myself and not inform them. Am I wrong for that?

Now I don't feel comfortable even asking to see my grandchildren, because I fear it's been embedded in their minds that Grandma is all about her and no one else.

I posted about this situation on Facebook to see how everyone would respond and what advice people might offer. A co-worker came to me and com-

ported me about the situation. All I could do was cry. I never knew my kids felt that way about their mom. Please give me some advice. — *Devastated Mom*

Dear Devastated Mom: Slow down and take a deep breath. This is a whirlwind, but it seems that at the center of it all is your feeling of abandonment. I reckon that's caused you to lash out in ways you might not recognize as lashing out — with guilt trips, for instance. If you've been trying to get your kids to pay attention to you by making them feel bad, that has backfired. It's time to stop catastrophizing and start communicating. Talk to your children. Tell them you didn't realize how negatively they felt about your behavior. Ask what you could do to be a bigger part of their lives. And for everyone's sake, please stop posting about it on Facebook.

Dear Annie: I know that some people complain about "older" trick-or-treaters in their neighborhoods and that some people even refuse to hand out candy to

kids who look older than 13.

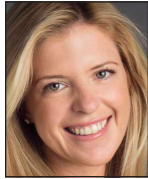
In my view, it's a fine line between child and teen, and it's a difficult adjustment for most. Teens still love some kids activities, yet they want to appear grown-up. When we get older kids ringing our doorbell on Halloween, we always give them double the candy and tell them so. We also tell them that we're proud of them for choosing to have fun. They are delighted with our response, and you can see the appreciation in their eyes.

Lighten up, people! They have the rest of their lives to be adults. Let them hang on to some parts of their childhood a bit longer. And let the parents do the parenting; it's not our business. Our grown children let their own children know when it was time to quit trick-or-treating.

It also doesn't matter how much, if any, care was put into a costume. It's rare when they're not in costume, though. Teens are quite creative and enjoy our noticing a costume. We love the night. It's fun! — *Marie*

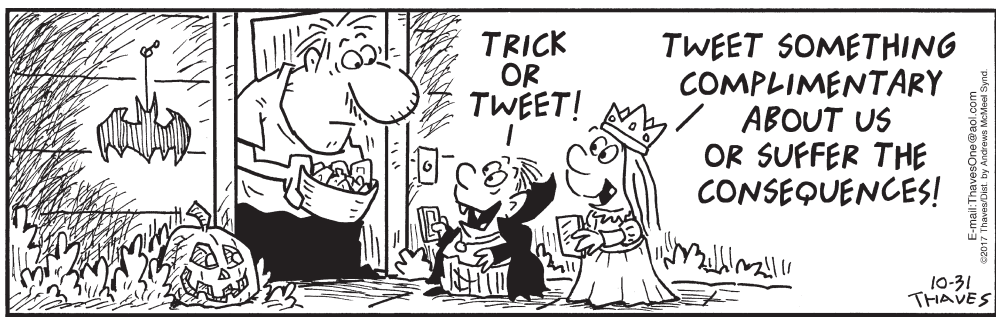
Dear Marie: I'm printing this just in time for Halloween. May we all embrace such a fun-loving spirit.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

FRANK AND ERNEST



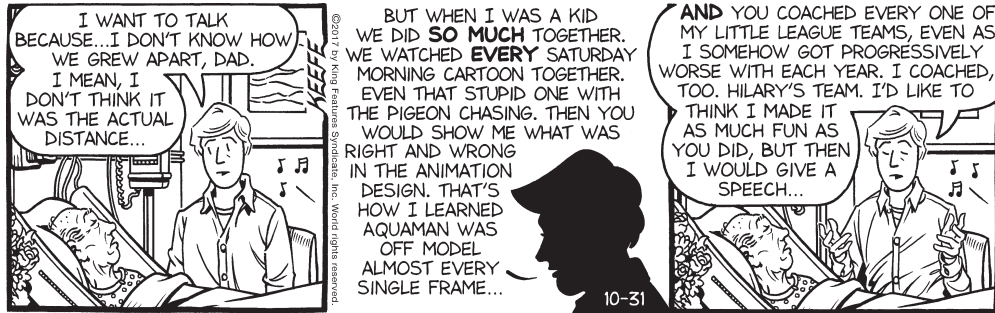
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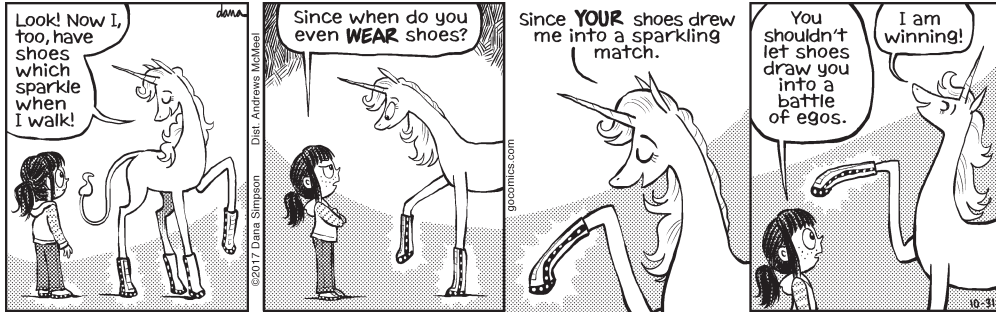
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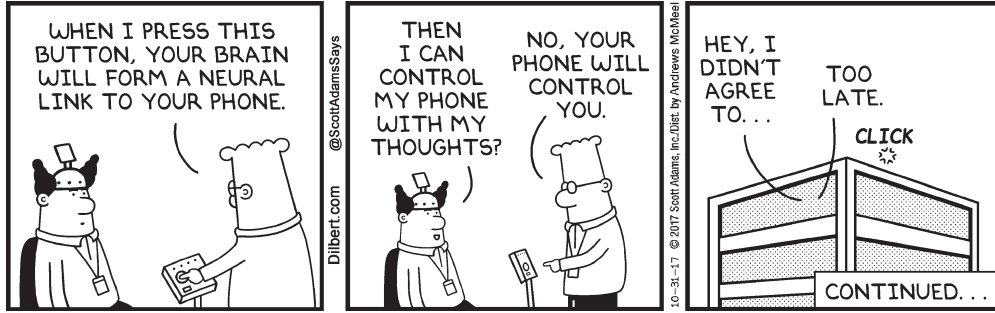
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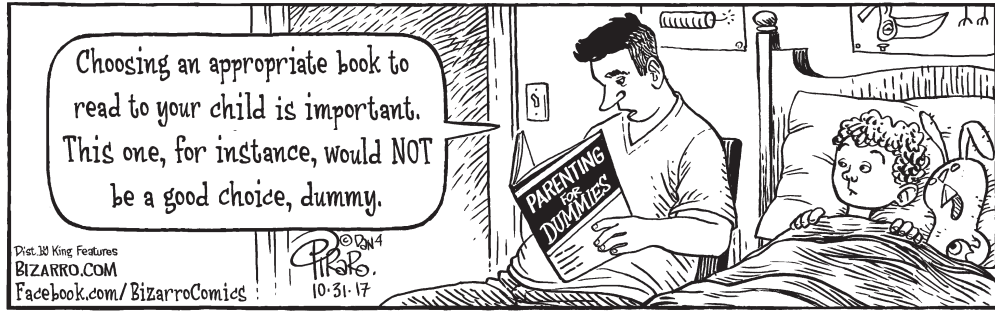
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