

Ask away worker says

Dear Annie: I work in retail, and my job requires a good deal of direct contact with customers. I often encounter customers who are hesitant, even apologetic, to ask me questions when they have them, the usual reasons being that I "look busy" or that they are unsure whether I can help.

I realize that these people are attempting to be polite, but their timidity in asking often has the opposite effect. Retail is like any other job, in that I am paid to be busy; if I am too busy for customers, it is my responsibility, not theirs, to find someone who can help them or to inform them that I will be with them shortly. The same follows if I am unable to help. But I will never know whether I am able to help unless they proceed with their question. Regardless, customer service is my duty as part of my job.

Even setting aside my

duties at work, I was raised to put the needs of others before my own; therefore, requests are never as much of an imposition as customers think. I would even go so far as to say that they think their questions are an imposition in order to consider themselves more important, but that is merely mild paranoia.

Is there a way to tell customers that you find their behavior rude without being rude yourself or lecturing them? — *Gentle Giant*

Dear Gentle Giant: Your signature gives a clue about why customers might be reluctant to ask you for help. If you really are giant-sized, they may be intimidated. So my advice is to keep doing what you are doing — to be as solicitous, helpful and kind as possible. Stay gentle and sweet. As the saying goes, "You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar."

Dear Annie: At a recent seniors meeting, I heard similar stories from two women in the group. Each one had been absent from her home for a couple of days, and close relatives took it upon themselves to "clean" their kitchens. Shelves were rearranged to suit the fancy and height of the rearrangers. Items were tossed that the owners considered useful. This caused great distress to the women. Neither of these women is tall, and their relatives put things on shelves that required them to use a step stool. One cannot see well and now can't locate needed items readily. You get the picture. For well-meaning relatives: Please do not do this to your loved ones! — *Sympathetic Senior*

Dear Sympathetic Senior: I second your plea. No one should reorganize another person's place without permission, even if it's done out of love and with the best intentions. Home is where you hang your hat — and it's jarring when someone moves the peg.



Annie Lane
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TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). What you're looking for is out there, but you have to start asking the right questions to find it. Asking friends is a start, but a stranger will be able to tell you more.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Personal disclosures are, as a rule, unprofessional, and you're glad about that. Now if only everyone else would get the memo! You're in the mood to be concise and to the point, avoiding chitchat.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Your conscience will be even more influential over your day than usual. Your mind will hold on to responsibility until it's handled. For this reason, if you get the hard work out of the way first, you'll have a much better day.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). The magic itinerary for maximum happiness isn't something that you'll naturally luck into. It's a puzzle to work out. The perfect plan must be researched and carefully thought through. You can do this.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You'll be looking at the bottom line and thinking about how you can get there faster, with less of a mess, and fewer involvements along the way. The others probably aren't thinking along these lines. So how will you bridge the gap?

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Though you've looked at it carefully, you can't see every angle. Stay open. Maybe you've already made up your mind, but try to open it anyway. Value the input of others.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You may never get the complete agreement you want, but the potential for concession, cooperation and getting your goals met will be very high if you

can avoid argument and conflict altogether.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Witnessing a messy drama, you get the feeling that it would be wise to limit your involvement. The trouble is, you're already involved; you just don't realize yet how.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You're not doing the work merely to earn money. There's much, much more involved, including the need to express yourself, to fill a need and to contribute to an experience all can be proud of.

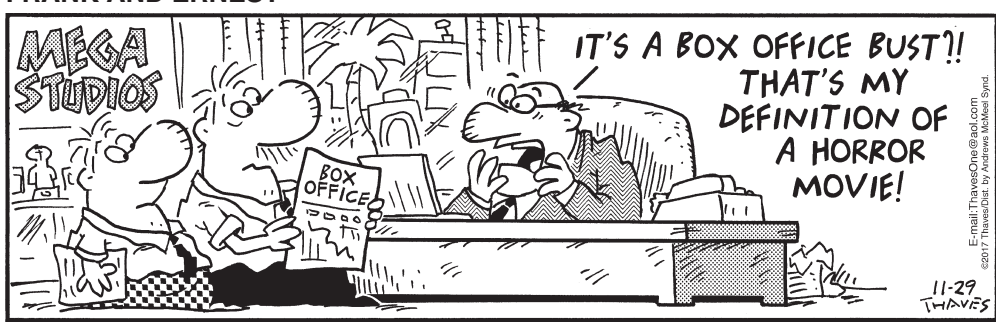
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Why is it that the more you want something, the harder it is to ask for it? It's as though the energy of wanting has an actual weight to it that makes the exchange more cumbersome.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The project will progress with teamwork, which is not something you can achieve by crushing weak links and dissenters with smart-bomb logic. Forget about being right. All for one and one for all.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). It's empowering to have choices. Neediness is a function of limited choices. If you're feeling a little needy, think bigger. Figure out how you can create more choices for yourself.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Nov. 30). It's big-picture stuff this year. You'll make a life defined by what you do, not by the world's reaction. You'll care less what people think and understand about your work, and you'll set new standards for yourself that have to do with achieving a brand of success that's extremely meaningful to you. Victory will be yours! Libra and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 41, 1, 9, 17 and 22.

FRANK AND ERNEST



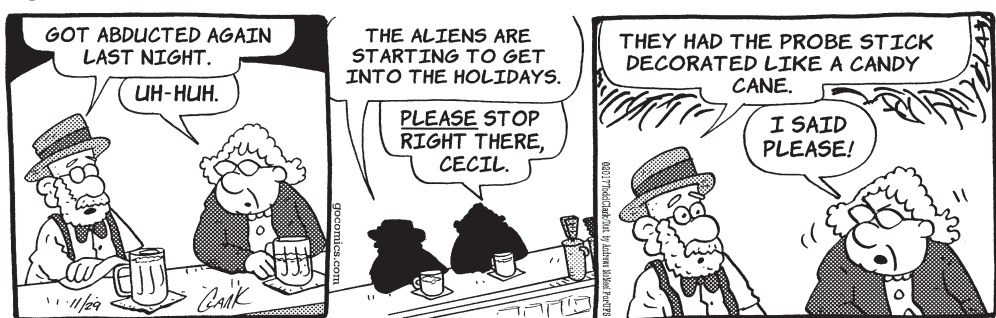
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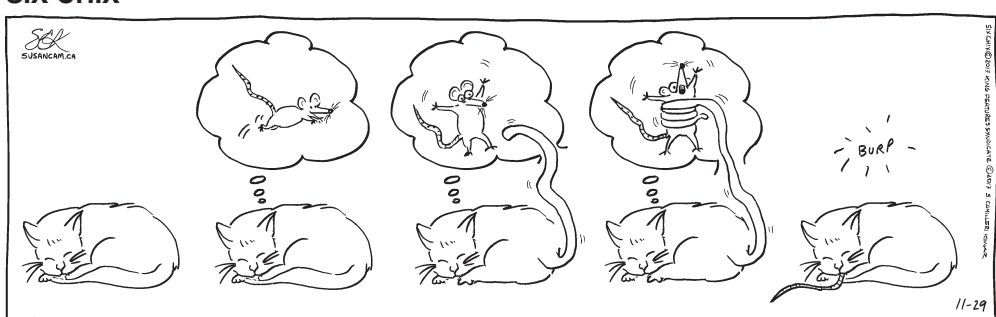
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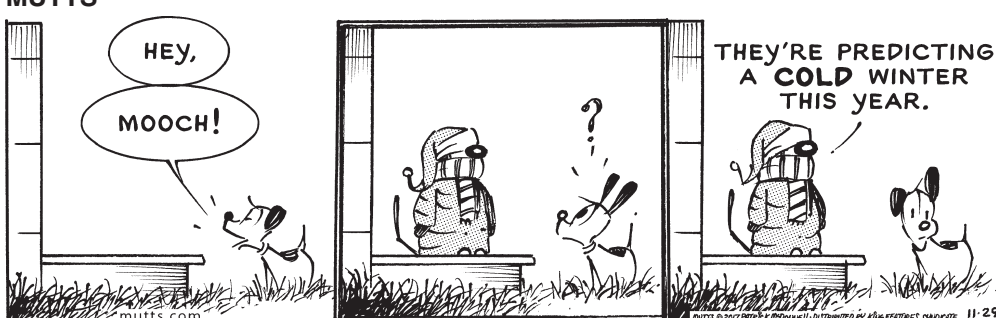
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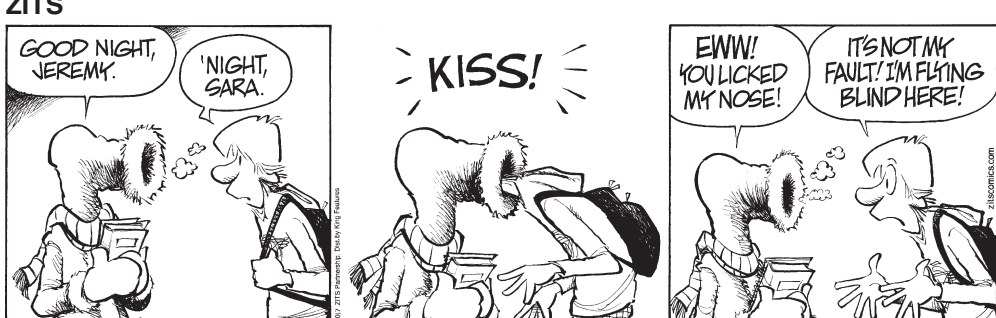
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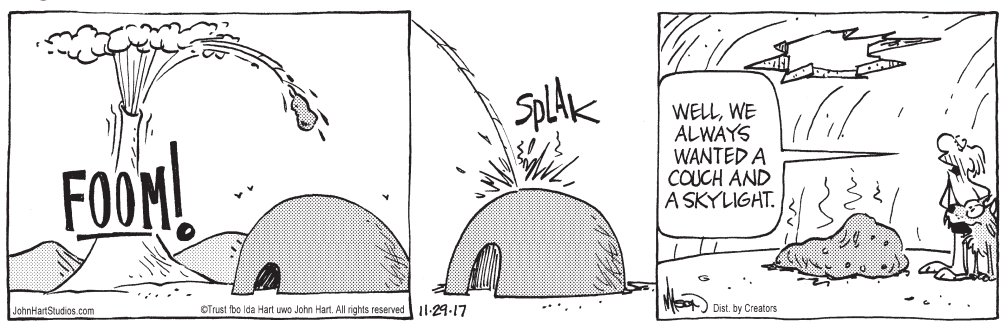
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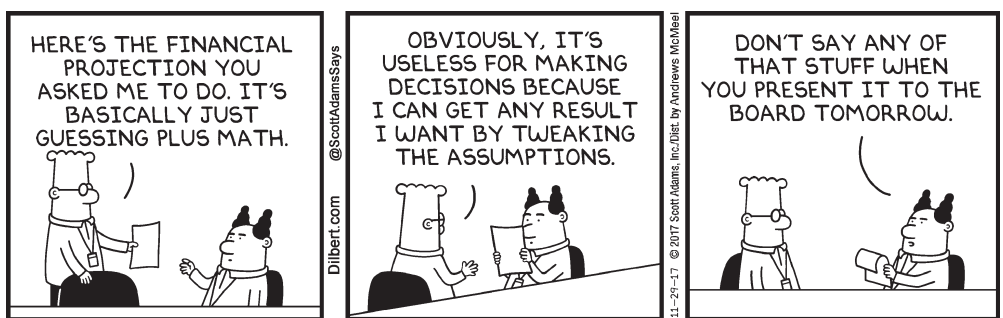
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