

I've gotta take that call

Dear Annie: I have an old and close friend I've known for 50 years. We live far apart, and the only way to talk is by telephone.

Over the past several years, my friend has started to suddenly interrupt our calls when there is a click on the line signaling another call. He will announce midsentence that he has another call coming in that he has to take and then abruptly hang up. He interrupts himself this way as often as he does me. It happens virtually every time we talk, no matter what time it is.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

I thought a solution to this might be to ask him to call me when it is convenient for him. That has not stopped this rudeness; he does this even when he has placed the call.

I am at my wits' end and cannot think of a solution short of writing off the friendship. This behavior is very much outside his normal character, which makes it all the more frustrating.

Any ideas on tactfully dealing with this problem? — *I Wasn't Finished*

Dear I Wasn't Finished: Don't write off the friendship

before you've told your friend how you feel. You should at least let him know these abrupt good-byes bother you and give him the chance to say his piece. This is a hunch, but is it possible you've not taken verbal cues — such as “Well, it's getting late” or “I should let you go” — that he'd like to end the call? He may be using call waiting as a quick way out. After all, with 50 years' worth of stories, I'm sure you two could talk for hours.

Dear Annie: I have read in your column numerous letters from families who, for various reasons, do not have any caring grandparents or other close relatives in their children's lives (for example, the recent letter from “Protective Husband”). My husband and I had the same problem.

Rather than see our children miss out on the benefits of having grandparents, we carefully observed older friends and neighbors and adopted “chosen” grandparents for our children. Whenever we moved, the process began again, to the benefit of both families. There were always many

jobs that each family could do for the other. And the “grandparents” never felt that life was passing them by or that there was no one for them to call on when they needed help with minor repairs, yardwork, heavy lifting or technical problems that can perplex older minds.

Our chosen grandmother was a widow whose biological grandchildren lived in other states. I was finishing my bachelor's degree at the time, and she was truly a wonderful blessing to our family. She would ask what I was fixing for supper and then offer to cook it and eat with us and watch my youngest do his homework, all while I finished my assignments. She was a real saint who enabled me to have the time to study and graduate with honors. Then I became an award-winning school-teacher for 39 years, which I might not have been able to do without her help decades before.

Please look around and choose carefully. And remember that all family members do not have to be biological relatives. — *Blessed by My “Chosen” Family Members*

Dear Blessed: It sounds as if she loved having your children in her life, too. What a wonderful idea.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Just because you can read the signs doesn't mean you will follow them. They seem geared toward guiding you down the conventional route. But that's not the only way. You'll be in the mood to explore and find your own way.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The struggle is between you and you today. If you're too strict with yourself, you'll rebel and do nothing. So be gentle. Praise and encourage yourself. You're doing so much that's right.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The people around you may heartily agree, but it's time to take your idea wider, keeping in mind that there are those in the world at large who believe much, much differently from the way you do.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Clear the air in these last days of the year so you can go into 2018 without baggage. Argue and persuade if you must, but ultimately it's negotiation and a fair compromise that will serve you best.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Regarding a rocky relationship: There's so much that's possible here, so don't give up unless you're truly unwilling to do things differently. Change can still happen.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're disarming, and you'll be in the perfect company to exercise your charms. There are those who really need to drop their defenses! They'll be much better for knowing you today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Today, if you were a bird, you'd be a peacock. You have some colorful stuff to strut! And since birds of a feather flock together, you may be a part of a truly impressive show and tell.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You'll have to call

up some powers of diplomacy to deal deftly with the group today. These guys aren't going to get along unless there's someone in the middle to buffer the conversation. That person is you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Look on the bright side — not directly into the sun though, or you'll damage your eyesight. The bright side isn't the extreme positive. It's a light filtered through the clouds, trees, buildings and people that exist in the real world.

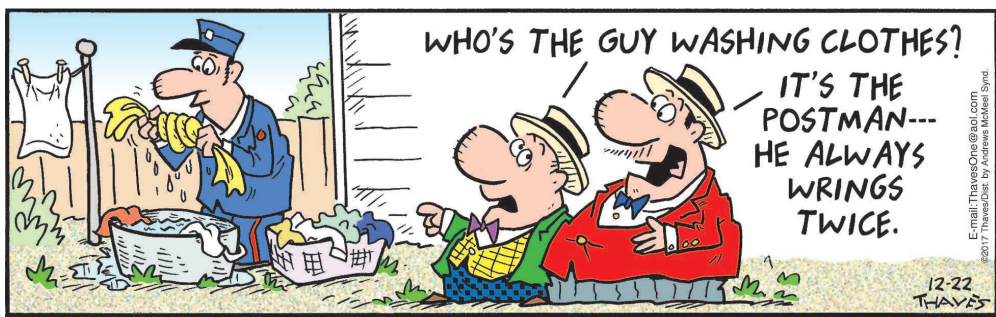
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You have something on your mind, but it's not like your mind is “consumed” by this. Yours is a strong intention. This is better for you now, as it leaves room to work with what others want. Oblivious ambition is dangerous.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Some say you should master your thoughts to master your actions, but this isn't always the order that works. Your thoughts can be feral and powerful as wild horses, but do things differently and your thoughts will calm down.

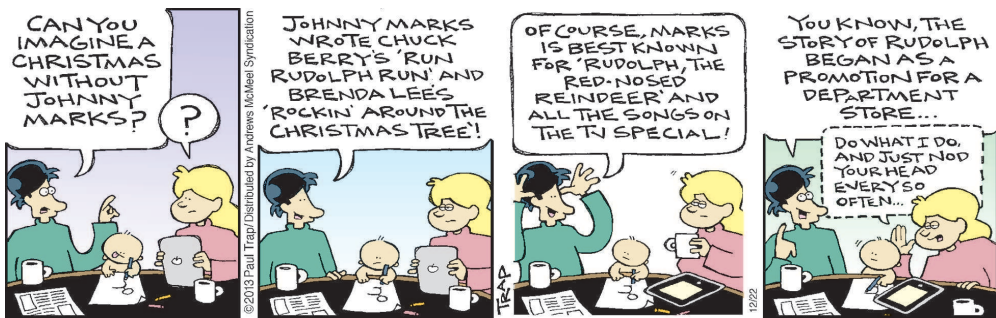
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Circumstances don't define you. Circumstances are opportunities. What defines you is always your reaction to these opportunities. Really good things can come out of less than ideal situations.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 23). Three weeks of luck will change your mind. Your needs are met but this only satisfies you if the ones around you are doing well too. You'll dedicate yourself to bringing up the whole group. This quest makes your life great — even magical. January brings an exciting discovery. Loved ones surprise and delight you. Virgo and Aries adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 40, 33, 37, 1 and 26.

FRANK AND ERNEST



THATABABY



PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



LOLA



SIX CHIX



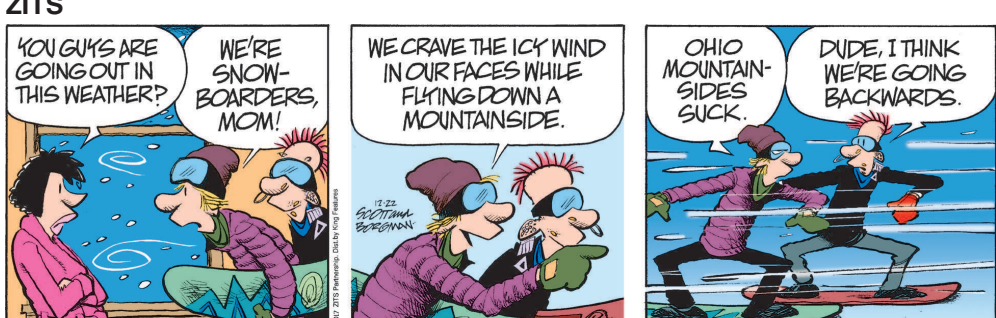
MUTTS



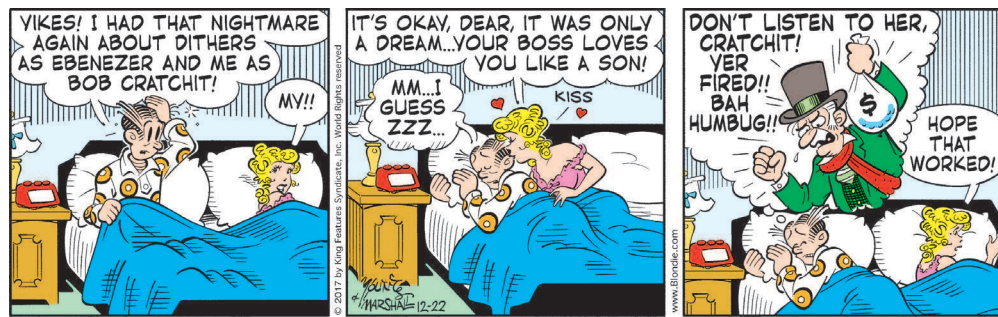
BABY BLUES



ZITS



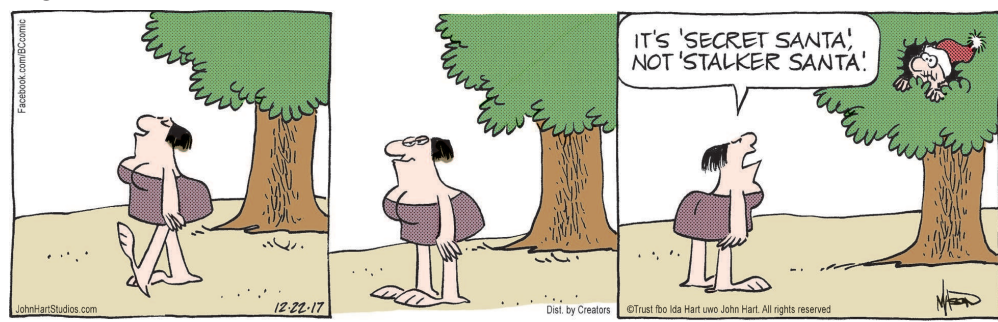
BLONDIE



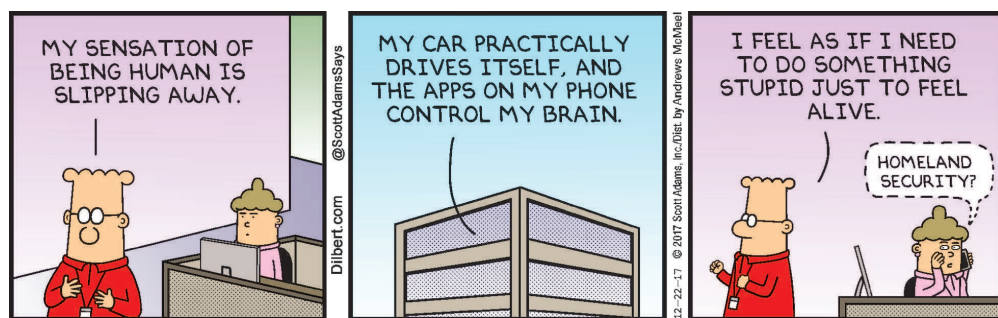
SALLY FORTH



B.C.



DILBERT



BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

