

Pleas go unheeded

Dear Annie: I have a friend who talks very loudly. It's quite annoying and irritating. She's so loud that it sounds as though she's angry or upset. Friends and family members have asked me numerous times why she talks so loudly. I have asked her nicely a million times to lower her voice. Soon after telling her, the volume goes back up, even when she is sitting right next to me. What is surprising is that she does not realize how loudly she talks. This person had her hearing tested about a year ago as part of a routine medical checkup, and her hearing was considered normal for her age. She tells me that she has been talking loudly all her life and gets annoyed when asked to lower the volume. Why is it that she cannot lower her voice even when she's been asked politely? Can such a nasty habit be changed? Would a speech therapist help? Do breathing exercises exist that could help her lower her voice? Could it be that she has some unknown medical problem? It's come to the point that I can-

not stand it anymore and this bad habit is hurting our friendship. — *Loudness Sufferer*

Dear Loudness Sufferer: Perhaps she was born with large vocal cords or is suffering a subtler form of hearing loss not detected in basic tests. (You might encourage her to see a specialist to rule that out.) Whatever the reason for her loud talking, her worse habit is refusing to hear her friends. Before it totally ruins the friendship, let her know how it hurts your feelings when she disregards your pleas.

Dear Annie: I bet you haven't heard this one before. My husband has narcolepsy. His assessment at the sleep clinic indicated that he goes into REM sleep instantly.

He usually stays up until almost 2 in the morning and often gets up at 6. Unfortunately, I am unable to fall into a deep sleep until he comes to bed, because I know his getting in bed will cause a stir and wake me up. The problem is I am barely functioning — and it causes fights when I try to

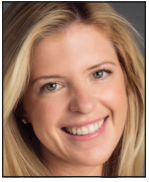
get him to come to bed at a reasonable time. I adapted when I was younger, but as I've gotten older, it's been much more difficult. I realize that this is my problem — even though if he slept more, it would probably have a beneficial effect for him, too. (He has a lot of health issues.) I don't know how to cope anymore. — *Sleepless in Spokane*

Dear Sleepless in Spokane: These days, many couples sleep in separate bedrooms, and I'm not talking about unhappy couples. In fact, these are very happy couples — because both partners are able to get a good night's rest, even if they have different sleeping habits.

If you don't have a spare bedroom, consider getting two twin beds. I've heard from many readers who have solved sleeping differences with spouses this way. One can get into bed without worrying that the rustling of covers and shifting of the mattress will wake the sleeping partner.

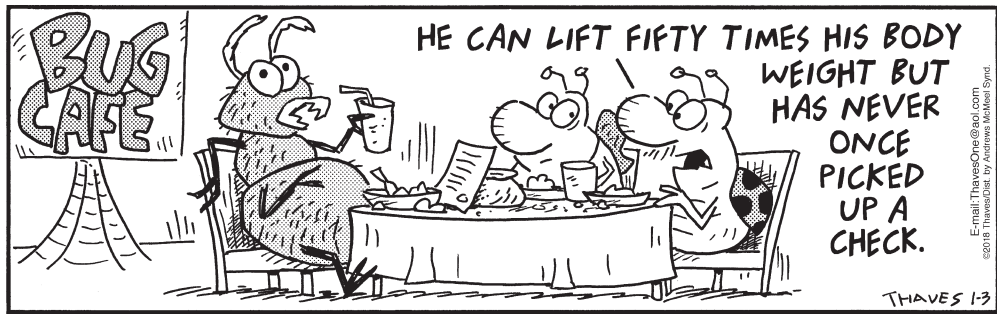
Though sleeping in separate beds might not be how you always pictured a happy marriage, what's really important is that you cherish your waking hours together.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
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Syndicate Inc.

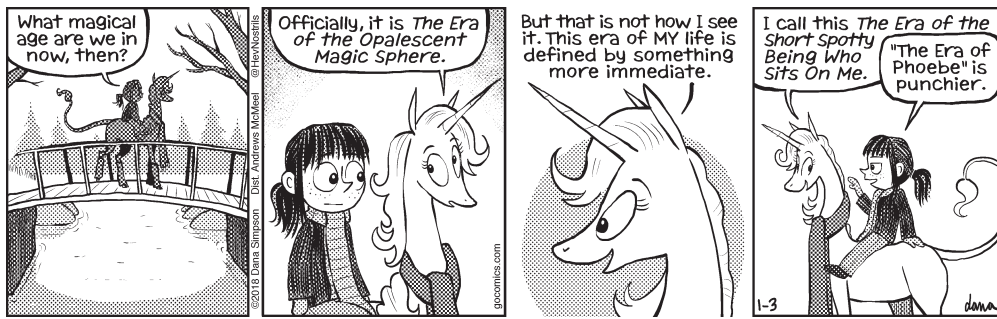
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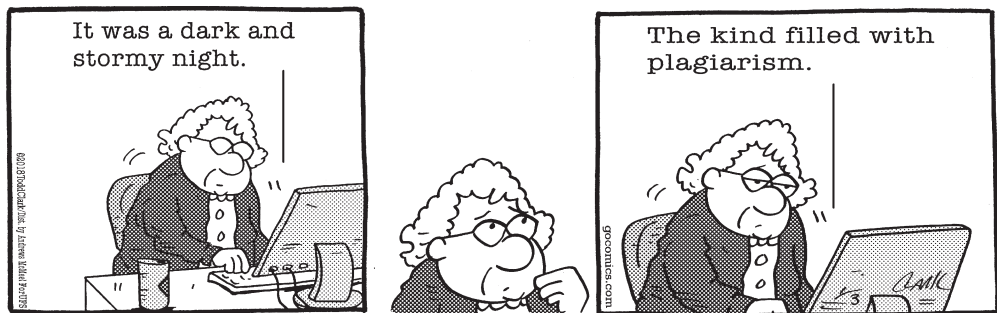
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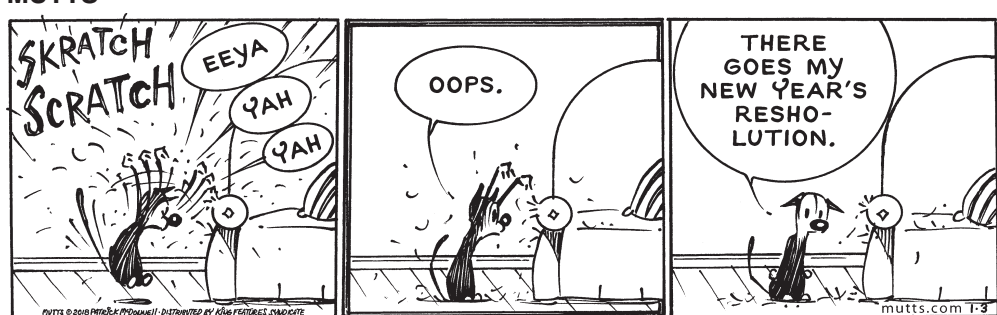
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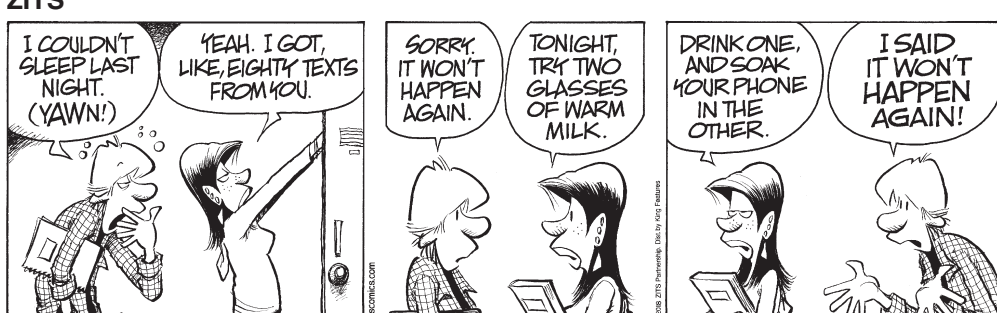
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BABY BLUES



ZITS



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Someone who is out of touch with his or her own business will be overly involved with yours. This is beneficial to no one. Life will work better when the everyone takes responsibility for what is rightly theirs, nothing more, nothing less.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Honor the unsung helpers in your life. Anyone who makes you look good deserves your lavish praise and maybe a treat, too. Bonus: Your self-esteem gets a turbo charge.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Though you happen to be in a driven mood, you'll stay the course even if you know you will never achieve the glorious goal. The true reward is in who you become for having dared to dream. The prize is but a bonus.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You love to be around creative people like you, and ones who aren't like you, too. Sometimes very creative people say and do the wrong thing, but you offer a measure of leeway for this because they give you so much.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It's not that you want people to go out of their way to serve you, but a little well-deserved special care would be nice. The human touch is a kindness you appreciate in whatever form it comes, metaphorically or physically.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There's something you could do better if you had formal instruction in it. The training will not be as difficult, time-consuming or costly as you think it will be. Look into it!

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Because you're so alive to the possibilities of life, staying on course will be a challenge. Your interactions may feel unfocused, yet there's a whimsy in your mood

that will add an interesting creative element to your work.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Different places grow different plants. Environments matter. Try to see the entire context of the issue. Maybe the people involved in a problem are not the ones who are to blame for it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Chances are, "I've tried everything," really means, "I've tried a few things." Failing is hard, but it gets easier as you keep going. If nothing has worked, that doesn't mean nothing will. Keep trying new things.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Everyone has holes in their education. These missed lessons are like potholes that can cause an accidental trip-up, but at least that will help you to identify where you need to fill in the blanks.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). To remember well is a gift. To forget well is also a gift. If neither is within your grasp today, then it's only because your brain is busy with a third talent — to project well. You'll recognize potential and imagine the best of what's possible.

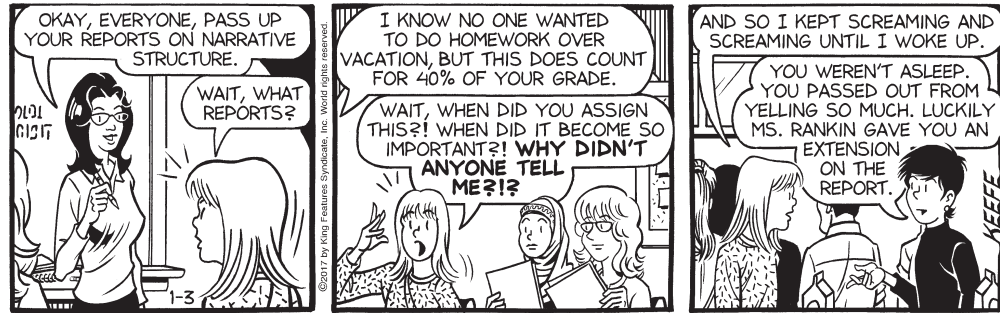
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Ralph Waldo Emerson said that common sense is genius dressed in its working clothes. You'll have such an outfit of genius on today as you solve complex problems with practical finesse.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 4). Your moral fiber gets stronger even as it gets more flexible. Your philosophy will shift — a sign of maturity and a function of the adjustments you employ to make your life work better. New relationships blossom. April brings a big deal. Improved finances will have to do with this shift of mind and lifestyle. Scorpio and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 2, 44, 47, 12 and 6.

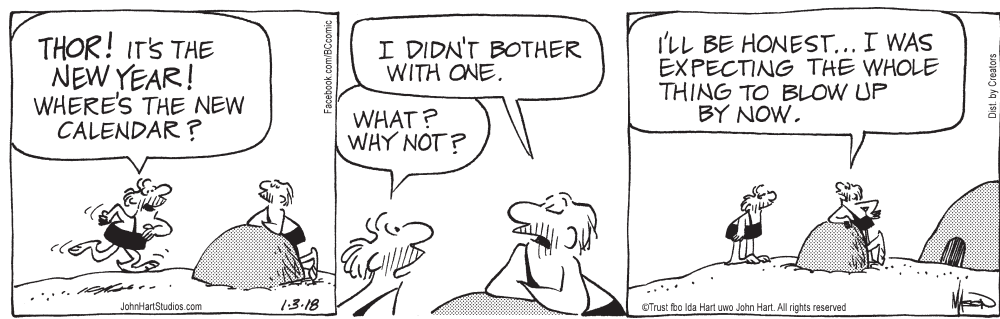
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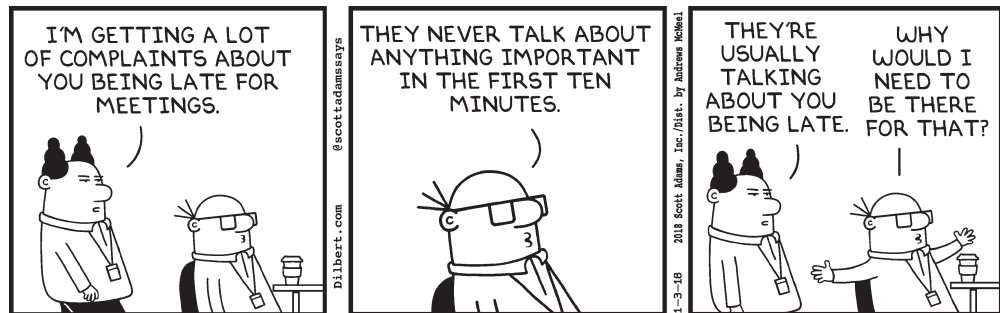
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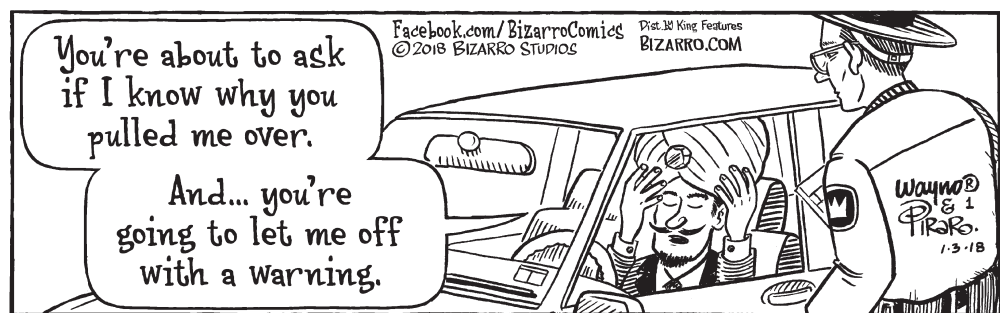
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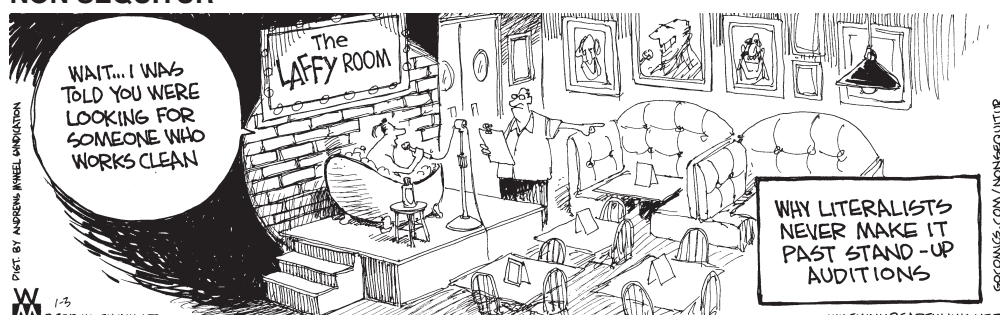
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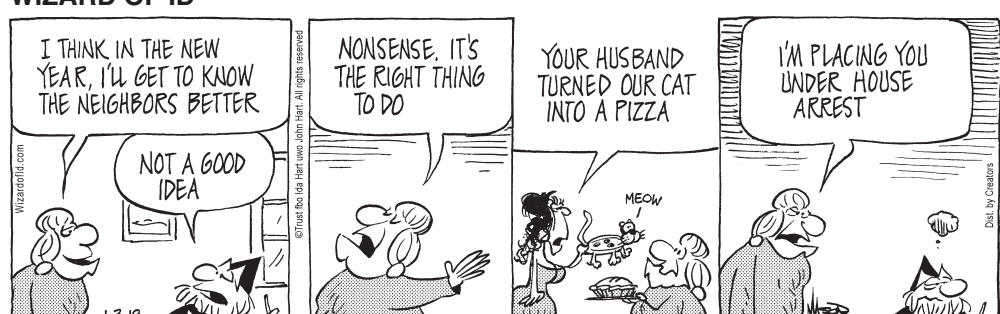
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