

# Feeling some Christmas guilt

**Dear Annie:** It was a wonderful Christmas season. However, I'm finding myself more guilt-ridden than ever. Here's why:

My wife and I are "gifters." We like to think of all the people in our lives whom we can think of — near, far, wherever they are — and try to give them something. Most of the gifts are fairly nice. For people we don't know so well or aren't so close to, we'll buy smaller gifts. We feel everyone should get something on Christmas.

We often will do a big baking day, making cookies and candies and cakes and all the lovely Christmas sweets you can think of. Those go into Christmas tins wrapped with bows and ribbons and partnered with other gifts. We feel they are wonderful gifts.

However, we always find that people are spending way more on our gifts than we are on theirs. Sometimes it's substantially more than we would ever spend. For example, a friend might give us a gift worth \$60 when we spent \$20 on her gift.

I'm left feeling as if our gifts

weren't good enough. (Not that anyone has ever said that.) We get some really great stuff, and I just feel at the end of the season as if we didn't give enough. Any way to cure my anxious thoughts for the next season? — *Guilt-Ridden Christmas Giver*

**DEAR ANNIE**



Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

**Dear Guilt-Ridden Christmas Giver:**

Rid yourself of that guilt, because it's the thought that counts, and it's incredibly thoughtful of you and your wife to make gifts. Homemade gifts require more thought and labor than store-bought ones. Perhaps the friends who are showering you with expensive gifts recognize that and want to go out of their way to thank you for your efforts. So stop putting yourself down. Start acknowledging the joy you've brought others.

**Dear Annie:** I am a female tool and die maker and model maker. I've experienced a lot of sexual discrimination and harassment in the years of my career. When I was working for a company in the early 1980s, I had a foreman who kept flirting with me while I was trying to do my

job. This man had a wife and five children, by the way.

When I told him to go away because I had work to do, he punished me by giving negative (false) feedback in my next performance review. I refused to sign the review. He said I would have to meet with the manager, so I did. The manager said he did not understand how I couldn't read a print, because I had been able to the previous year. But he still believed the foreman's feedback and refused to really hear me out. That was as far as it went. I left that company a year later for a better salary elsewhere. During my exit interview, I made sure to let the company know that the foreman was part of the reason it was losing me. He was demoted back to the bench. In my opinion, this wasn't enough, but in the '80s, this was more than what was usually expected in terms of company action. I still consider it a victory, though, albeit a small one. — *Louisville Machinist*

**Dear Louisville Machinist:** I am sorry that you were harassed. Kudos for speaking up at a time when it wasn't easy to do so. And congratulations on a long and successful career.

**TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE**

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** You want to be near people who are having a good time. You think it will rub off on you. But it will only rub off on you if you're somewhat interested in the subject of the good time. Go where there's a match of ideology.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** You'll never be bored today. You'll look at everything and store it up. You'll arrange and rearrange this collection of facts, details and tangibles until something makes sense, or until it's time to sleep, whichever comes first.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** Sometimes you stuff your feelings down like a person trying to fit one more thing into an over-full trash bin. But feelings aren't cast-off refuse. They're worthy of being set on the shelf. Examined. Maybe even admired.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** It gets better when you get better. Or maybe you make it better, and then you get better, too. Either way, the thing to do is to be actively hopeful. That won't be difficult for you at this busy time.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** While there are those who would go to great lengths for treasure and tribute, you're mild on the idea. What does it really mean, anyway? When you're fully rich on the inside, no amount of external validation can make you richer.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Saying nothing says something. It says a lot, actually. Today the silent response has meanings including, but not limited to, "I disagree," "I have a secret," "I can't be bothered with this," and "I'm processing the emotional impact of this."

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** You sense when people need their space and when they need to feel closer to you. As you honor the unspoken requests of others, they invest increasing amounts of trust in you.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** In searching for your advantage in a situation, take this suggestion from Thomas Jefferson: "Nothing gives one person so much advantage over another as to remain always cool and unruffled under all circumstances."

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** You want them to follow your plan. It's not an easy ask right now. How can you make them want and need to follow your plan instead of making them feel as though they have to follow it?

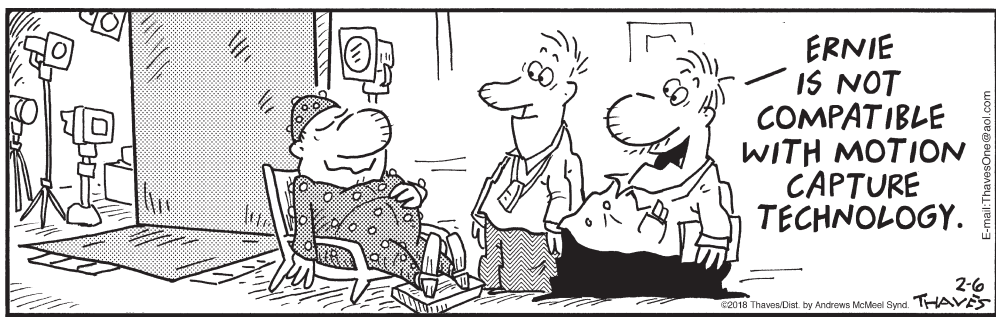
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** You're proud to have powerful friends, but sometimes this makes you feel, by comparison, less successful than them. Success is measured in many different ways. What will it take to broaden your definition?

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** People say they need their freedom, and then they head straight for a different kind of prison. Structure trumps freedom. It's finding the right structure that's the key, though, and that's what you're searching for now.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** You've been known to put yourself in stressful situations just to see if you can find your way out. Of course you can, silly. You don't have to do this to yourself, and it's kind of a waste of time today. So stop it!

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 7).** A windfall starts this solar return on a high note. One of your cosmic gifts now is that you're mysterious to people, and they want to get to know you better. You'll have more social opportunity than you know what to do with this year. April brings a fantasy to life. Regarding your personal life: July beckons you in a new direction. Sagittarius and Libra adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 39, 2, 21 and 48.

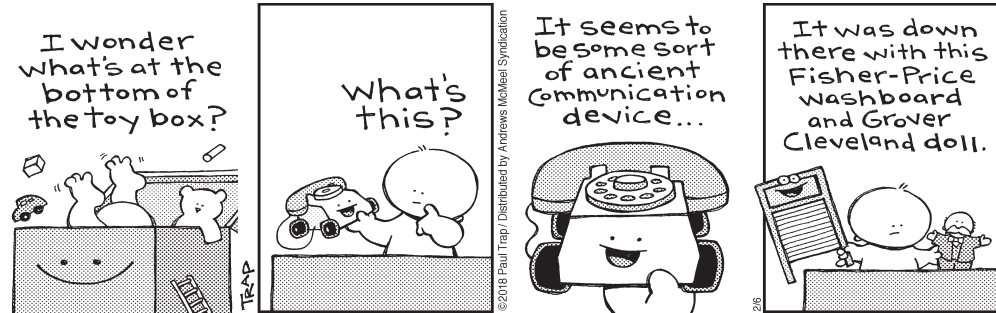
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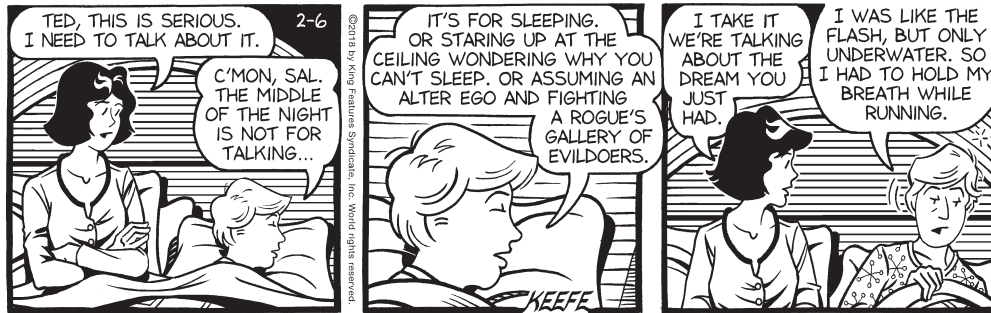
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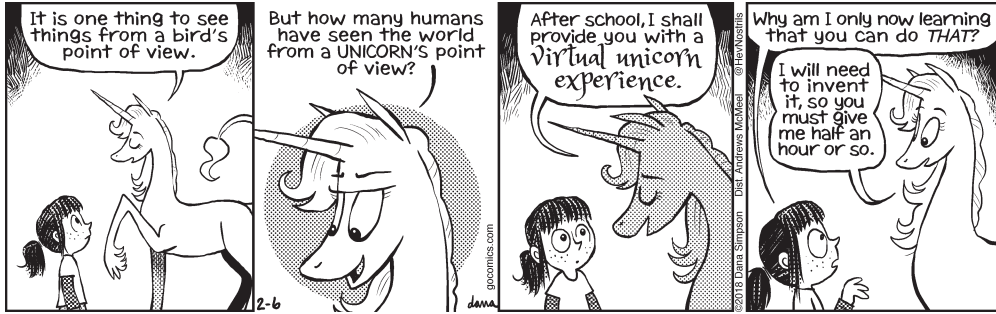
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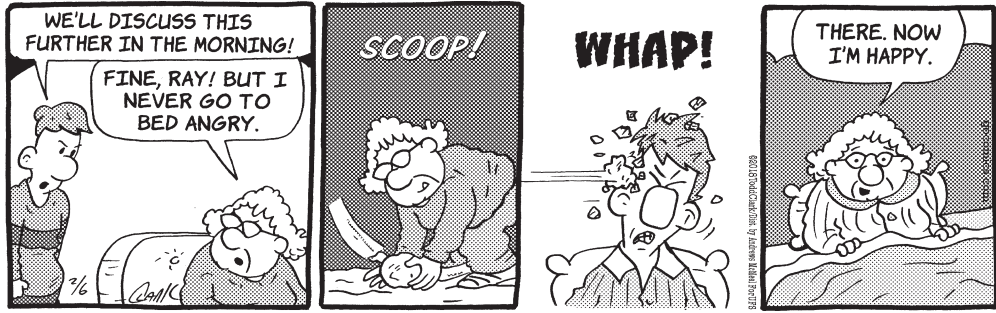
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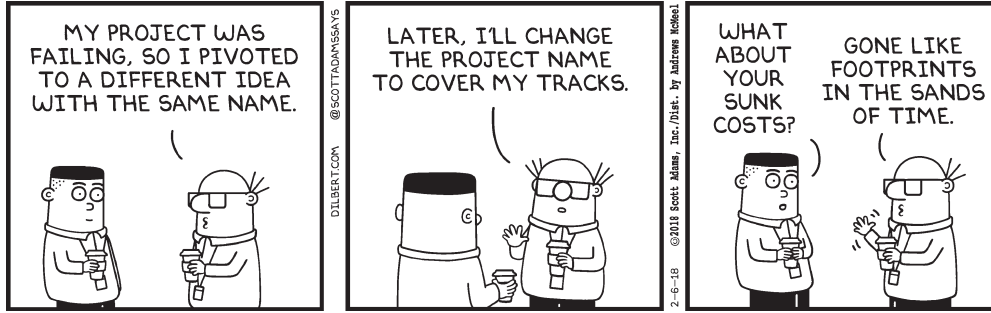
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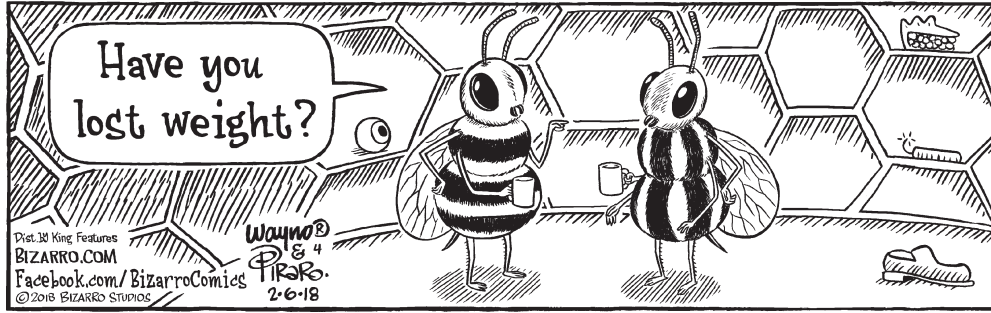
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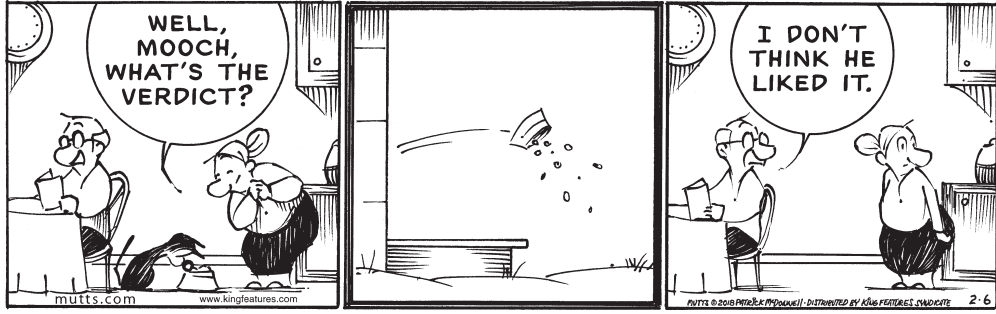
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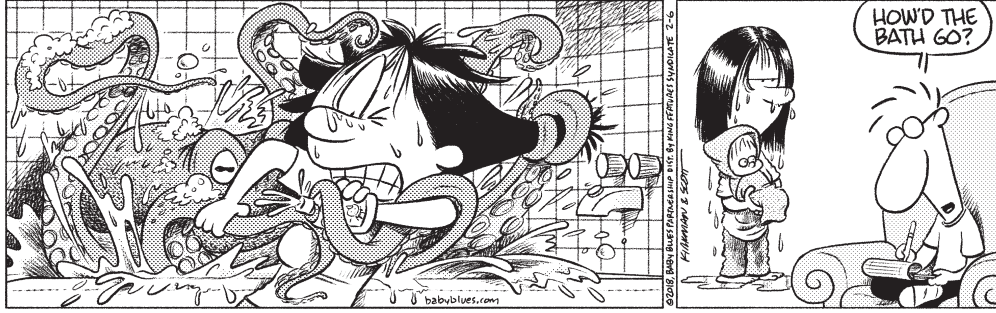
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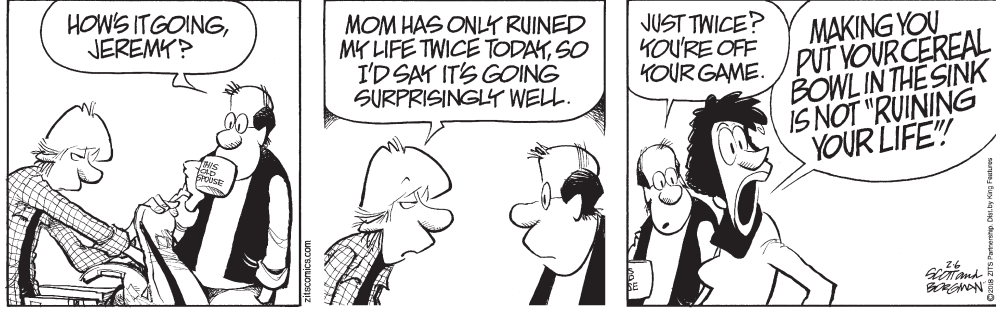
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