

Chitchat annoys patient

Dear Annie: I recently went to see my doctor about some troublesome symptoms I had been experiencing, and the entire time he was examining me, he kept up a running monologue about the holidays and politics and other assorted topics. I responded as necessary, but mostly I found myself wondering how he could be doing a good job of listening to my heart and lungs over the sound of his own voice. He did not spend nearly as much time discussing my treatment as he did chatting about unrelated subjects.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
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sionals who talk nonstop while delivering their services. I don't see the need for all the chitchat beyond what is called for in terms of common courtesy and professionalism.

I am not a crabby old lady who always finds fault. I just want people to focus on the task at hand. Multitasking has been proved to negatively affect performance, so why don't people just be quiet and do their jobs? Is it just me, or is there an epidemic of too much chattiness going on? —
Enough Chatter

Dear Enough Chatter: Small talk isn't for everyone. But it's less and less common these days, when so many people prefer texting faraway friends to talking with people who are in the same room. So try to appreciate this chitchat for the attempt at human connection it is. That said, your doctor, of all people, should recognize and respect your boundaries as a patient. So don't be afraid to express how you feel with a simple statement (and a smile, if you'd like to soften the edge):

"Really, I am much more interested in your observations about my health than in talking about politics." Saying this with a warm smile will help.

Dear Annie: I can respect your answer to "New Grandma," who felt shut out of her grandchild's life, but I thought a little more was needed — namely, a word to parents on how important it is for grandparents to be allowed to see their grandchildren at least occasionally. I haven't seen my grandson in over a year and get to FaceTime him only four times a year. We beg my son and daughter-in-law to come visit or to allow us to visit. We offer to cover any flights, hotels and rental cars, as well as lunches and dinners for us all. He's 7 now! I even started volunteering to read to schoolchildren so I can feel a little like a grandma. —
Heartbroken

Dear Heartbroken: I'm so sorry you've not been able to spend more time with your grandson. I commend you for signing up for the reading program. You could have easily just wallowed in your heartache, as so many of us do when we're feeling down.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You're not the weather; you're the sky. Do you see the sky clinging to the puffy white clouds or trying to trap the rain in one place? The sky doesn't have to push or pull the weather along. It only needs to let it happen.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Your reputation proceeds you. And don't worry: It's stellar, not because of your excellent public relations plan, but because you do the right thing consistently and people trust you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The details of self-care will be worth every penny and hour you spend on them. It's not about being who they want you to be. It's about a presentation that allows you to lose all self-conscious so you can relax and be your best.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're willing to take the necessary steps to further your professional life, except you're not so sure what they are. Ask someone who's been there. Bonus points if they have nothing to lose or gain from your decisions.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). People will perform to their potential because of the example of excellence you set. So don't worry about leading your people. You'll lead them just by being masterly at what you do.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). On a viral video, a boy waves slowly to a lizard. The lizard waves slowly back. Some laugh. Some say it's a coincidence. Some take it as a sign, but of what? You look for evidence of CGI: You're not a skeptic, but you're nobody's fool.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). What allows you to have more people in your life? A firm set of rules about relationships, that's what. With awesome boundaries and structures in place, you won't be

afraid to be taken advantage of or ill-appreciated.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Pay attention to the things you do when you're supposed to be doing something else. Those activities are more than mere distractions. They are pulling you for a reason. Could they be a key to your purpose?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Although it's never too late to set things straight, think twice before you do it. Make sure you have all relevant information and you know how you feel about it. There's nothing worse than having to take back amends.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There's so much hype in and around today with people wanting you to buy things, buy into their story, etc. Disconnect from the drama-barrage in favor of simple pleasures such as a walk, a cup of tea or the experience of beauty.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Super-sight is yours today. You'll see how it really is and how it will be, too. Although you should be warned not to make any decision based purely on the potential in things.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). When it all starts to get out of hand, that will be a positive occurrence — an affirmation that your life is a co-creation with the universal forces. So, you can't control it all. Good! Why would you ever want to?

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 9). You'll strike upon your next calling. This will take a while to put together. You'll do steady research and development then you'll really get it going in May. Day trips will be lucky for you. There's so much to see very close to you, and you'll bond with loved ones over the experiences you create. Sagittarius and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 30, 12, 19 and 43.

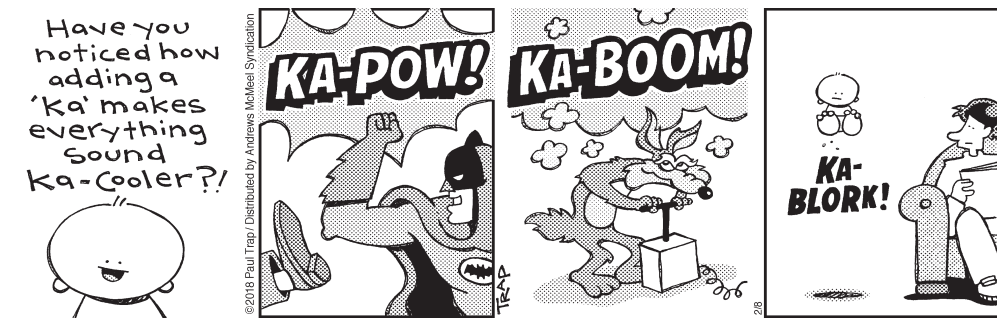
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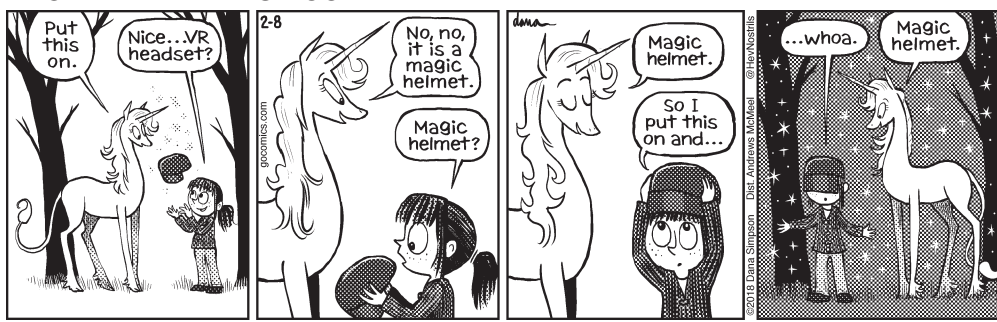
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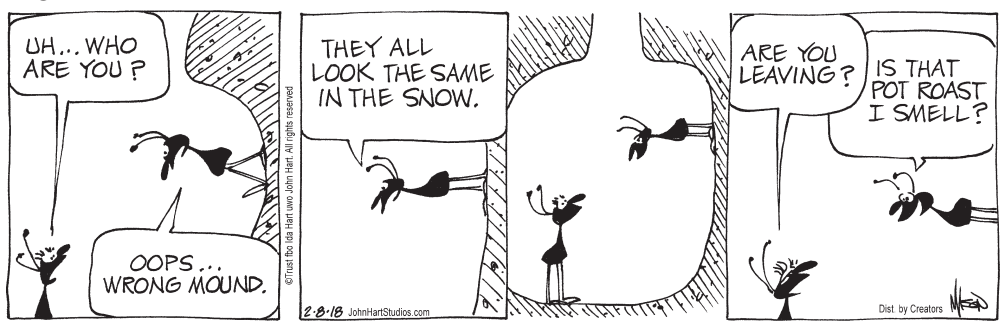
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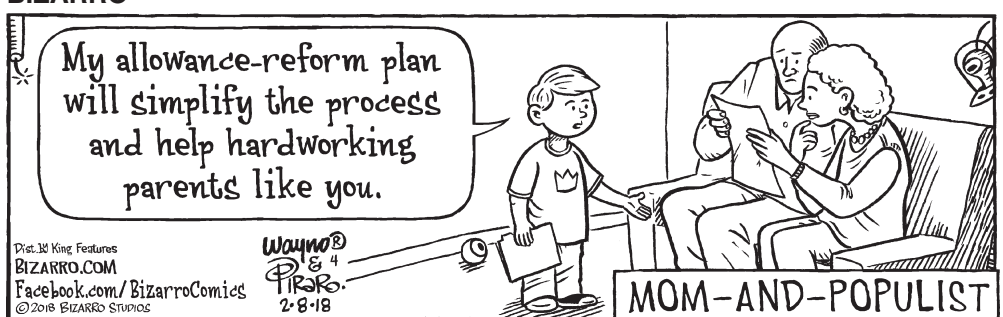
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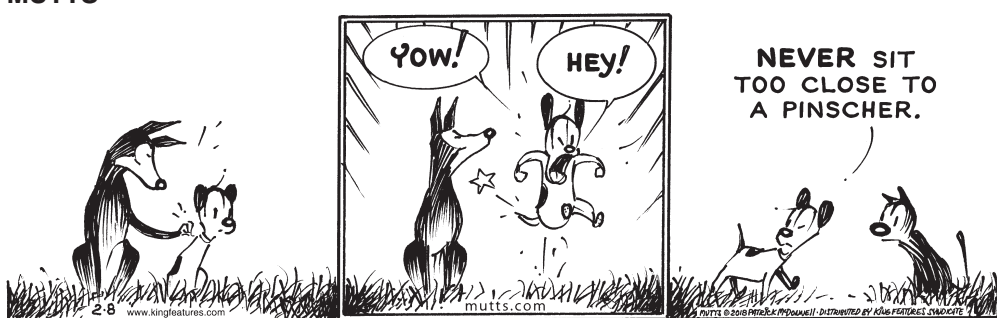
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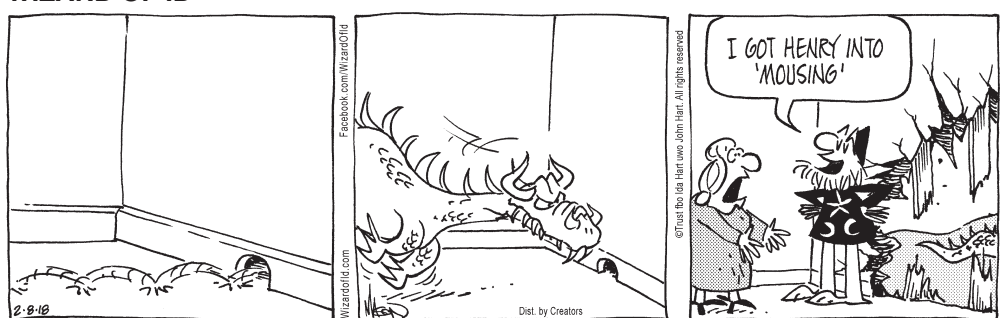
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