

Ready for a relationship

Dear Annie: I am a 26-year-old gay man who has recently entered a new relationship after being single for nearly four years. I'd kept my distance from dating until I was positive I found a man who was looking for the same kind of life I have been looking for — a life of commitment and honesty so we could build a future together. I have been seeing this man (let's call him "Doug") for about three and a half months. He is everything I've been looking for, and after the hard life of betrayal I've lived it's taken me a bit to adjust to trusting him, but I've finally made it there.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

What else is new to me is that he has two children, a 4-year-old daughter and a 3-year-old son. I have only met them once due to his ex-wife keeping them from him. They will be in court next week, as she's trying to get full rights of the children. He has done nothing wrong, and from what I've gathered she has done nothing but punish Doug out of spite and anger. I have done my best

to show my support and let him know I want to be there for him and his children and I welcome this package deal with open arms, as we've already fallen in love. However, I feel like he doesn't fully understand just how accepting of his children I really am. How can I assure him this is the life I want and that I am willing to do whatever it takes to be there for them? — *Life I've Always Wanted*

Dear Life I've Always Wanted: If you want to assure him you're in it for the long haul, you need to stop rushing. This is especially true because of the kids. As protective as you felt of your own heart because of past pain, imagine how Doug feels. He's got three hearts to protect. So take it slow. Remember that showing means more than telling. Demonstrate your commitment to him and the kids, day in, day out. Like the Grand Canyon, love is a monument built over time.

Dear Annie: I am so frus-

trated with my son and his wife and their two daughters (ages 15 and 20). I sent Valentine's cards with cash gifts and spent time to make a card for the 15-year-old, with about 20 pictures of her, from the time she was a baby till now. I taped a \$50 bill to the card because she told me at Christmas she likes "instant gratification." These children never acknowledge my gifts nor do their parents require them to. I texted the 15-year-old if she received my gifts and she said, "I'm not sure." We otherwise have a good relationship. These girls are smart, and their parents are professionals. I am to the point where I don't want to send any more gifts. Advice please. — *No Thanks*

Dear No Thanks: How sweet that you took the time to put together a collage of photos of your granddaughter growing up. How sad she failed to recognize the heart that went into that gesture. It sounds as though "instant gratification" has made these girls ungrateful. No longer sending them gifts or money is probably the best thing you can do for them in the long run.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You know better than to force your own thinking. It just doesn't work like that. Your mind will solve problems while you're busy doing something else. Amazing!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Water under the bridge can still flood the bridge. It will take more effort to leave the past behind you. You could use a metaphorical hovercraft, hot air balloon or ... well, you decide. Then dream yourself into it and rise above.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). This chapter in your life doesn't have a title yet, and you shouldn't worry about finding one for it right now. Let the narrative roll out. Let the relationships go undefined for a little while longer.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). A lot will depend on the company you keep. Meeting interesting people makes you feel like a people person. You will be rejuvenated by excellent conversation, smiles, hugs and laughter.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). There are definitely perks that come with being hard on yourself. You achieve more. You surprise people, including you. You put out fabulous work. Everything within reason, right?

VRIGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). When people get what you're saying without you having to say it in an obvious way, when people laugh at your jokes, when they understand your shorthand — this is love. No wonder it makes you so happy.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). It will be significant to recall how you got here. There's a part of this journey you'll want to repeat, and there's a part you'll never want to repeat. Go back to the beginning. Do you remember how this started?

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You'll have to determine something a little difficult today: Is temptation to be resisted, or is it a signal to get what you really need? Are your cravings a gift from heaven or an enticement toward a lesser version of yourself?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Pain leaves scars, and happiness doesn't. That's why it's harder to remember! But don't let it slip away. Make the effort to capture something of it — a picture, a souvenir, a keepsake for your heart.

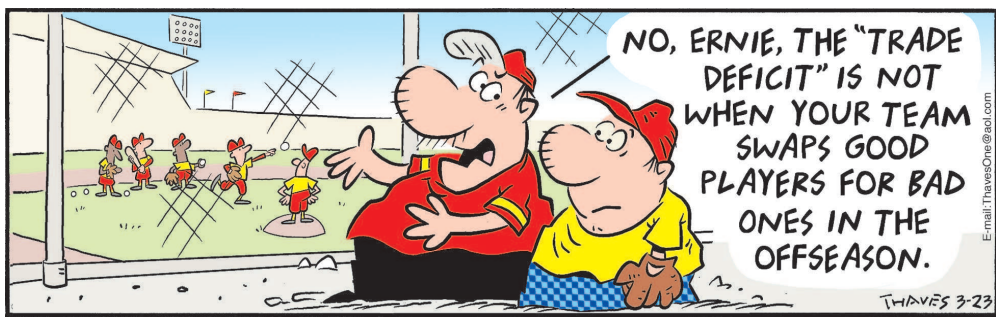
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The team is the theme. There will be great satisfaction in providing what the other lacks and accepting the contribution you need. Together you'll fix it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). When you're not represented by the stories around you, it can be an alienating feeling. But you're not an outsider. This is where you belong. And there are more who think like you. This is why you must tell your story.

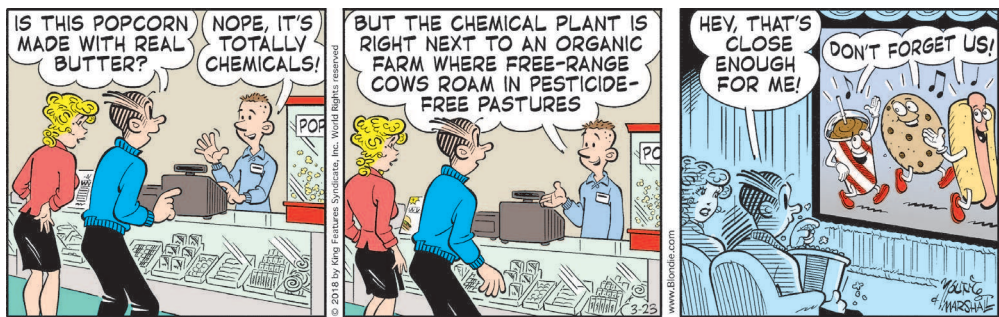
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your appreciation will matter even if it doesn't seem to. For instance, stopping to appreciate a high-flying bird will make a difference — maybe a mystical difference, but it still counts. Don't assume that every score is added in this realm.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (March 24). Birthday wishes hold real magic, so don't take the ritual of blowing out the candles lightly. You'll enjoy giving loved ones as much time as possible, which will involve some travel. April and October bring pursuits that make your heart sing. A high level of focus and mastery will be required. Invest to acquire the skills. Libra and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 14, 44, 1, and 29.

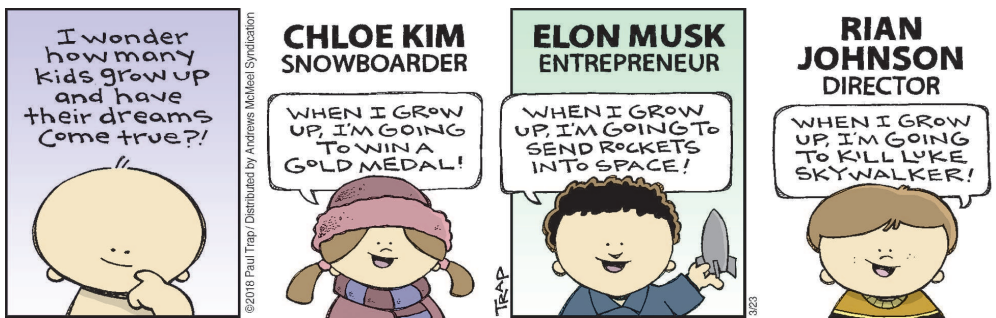
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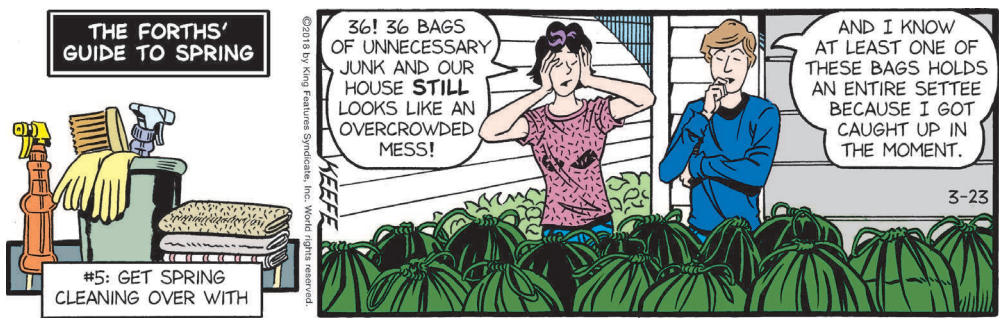
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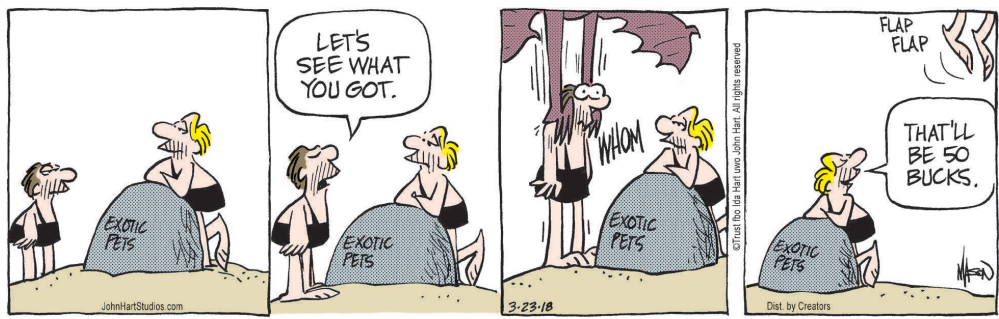
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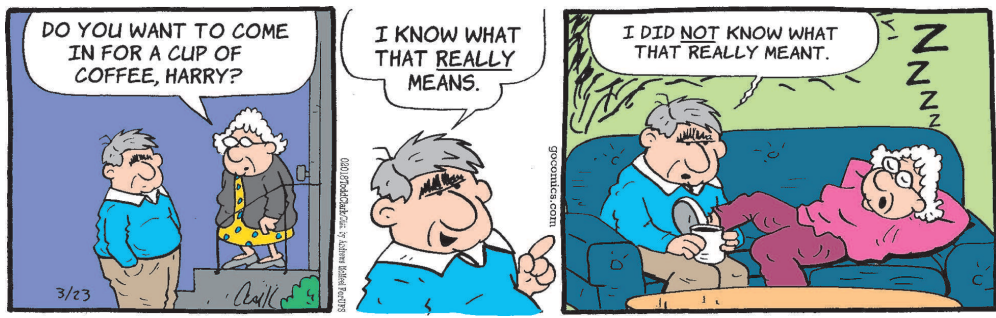
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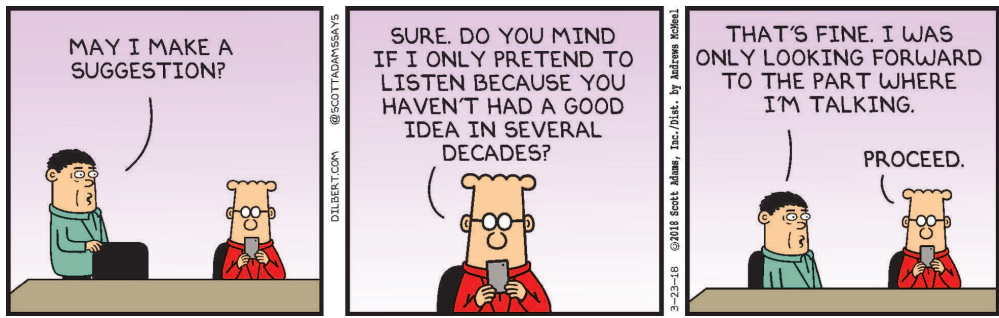
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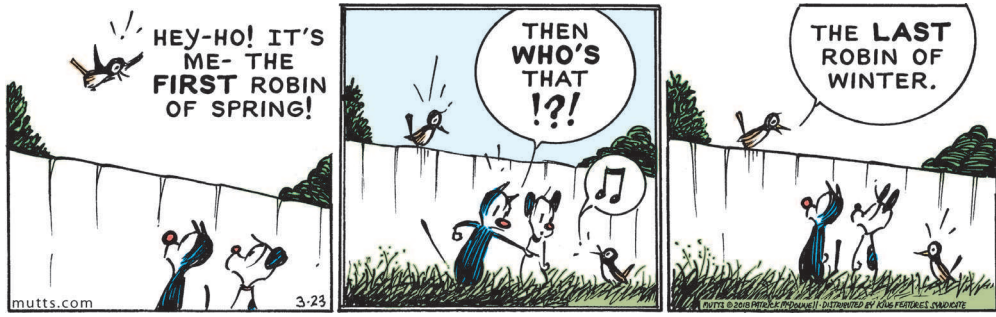
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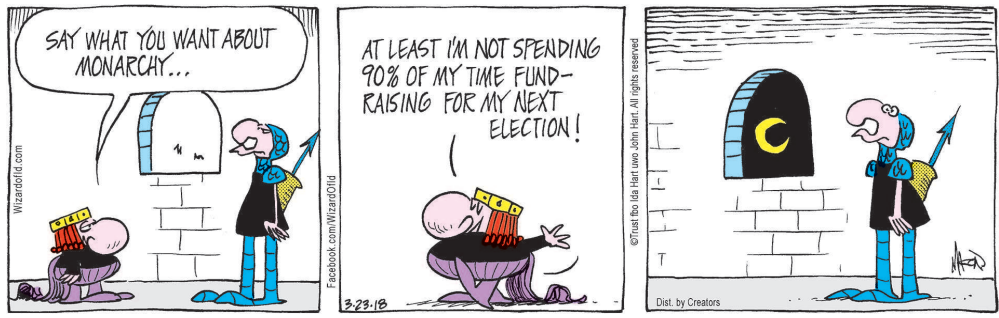
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