

Education on drinking alcohol

Dear Annie: My daughter has grown up in the blink of an eye. It seems as if I was just introducing the ABCs, and now she's reading Shakespeare in school. We talk every day about her classes and activities, and I also make sure we discuss underage drinking.

When I was young, conversations about alcohol consumption were along the lines of "Don't do it" and not about the impact of alcohol on my body, particularly my adolescent brain. Now that I'm a parent, I try to make sure I have the information I need to teach my daughter to make healthy decisions.

As my daughter has grown up, I've tried to discuss alcohol consumption in ways she'd best understand. For example, she and her friends are undergoing many emotional and physical changes, and they're fascinated by how their bodies and minds operate. I started using information from programs such as Ask, Listen, Learn to connect her natural interests about her brain and body with the impact underage drinking can have on them.

This resource has helped me

better understand the nuanced functions of the brain and how they are impaired by alcohol (especially the still-developing brain), and it has given me more confidence in conversations with my daughter about why drinking is an adults-only activity. The interactive videos and games have given my child a new fun outlet for learning, too.

I hope you'll help in informing my generation of parents about the tools available to help them talk to their children about saying no to underage drinking. — Shannan Y.

Dear Shannan Y.: You are so right that it's important for parents to talk to their teen children about alcohol. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (<https://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking>) also offers resources for parents wrestling with this issue — even a free app for practicing the conversation (called "Talk. They Hear You"). Teen drinking has, thank goodness, decreased over the past two decades. Let's hope it will continue to decline with active parent involvement.

Dear Annie: As a psycho-

therapist, I wonder whether the nose-picking daughter of "Dad Who Cares" has a compulsion. Not wanting to stop unhealthy behaviors is often because of compulsion. It's not that she won't stop; it's that she can't (without help, that is). An excellent book and wonderful read on the subject, by science writer Sharon Begley, is "Can't Just Stop: An Investigation of Compulsions." — Karen, LCSW

Dear Karen, LCSW: That's a useful angle to consider, and I appreciate the book recommendation.

Dear Annie: It is worth mentioning that the nose-picking habit may be because the daughter has an infection inside her nose. Impetigo, which often occurs on the skin, may instead emerge inside the nose, causing scab formation. It is caused by strep or staph bacteria. A visit to her primary care physician for a culture of the inside of her nose is in order. A treatment with penicillin would most likely clear up the infection and maybe stop the urge to pick. — Certified Medical Microbiologist

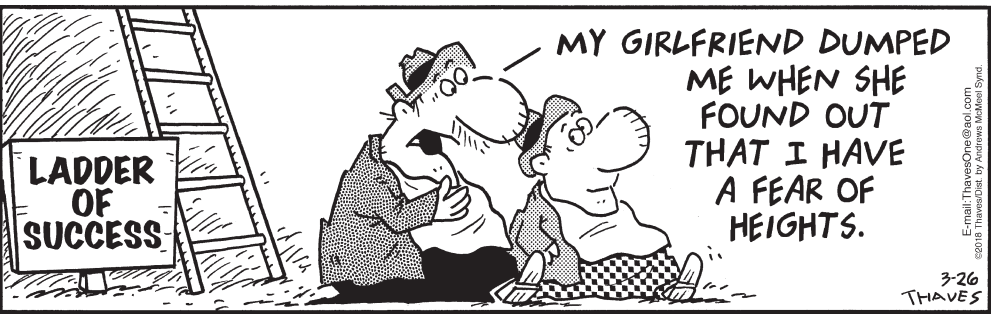
Dear Certified Microbiologist: Another helpful take on this unsettling issue. Thanks for writing.

DEAR ANNIE

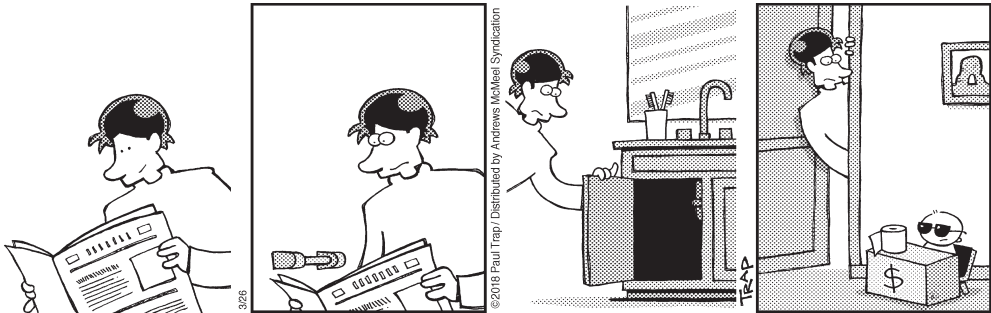


Annie Lane  
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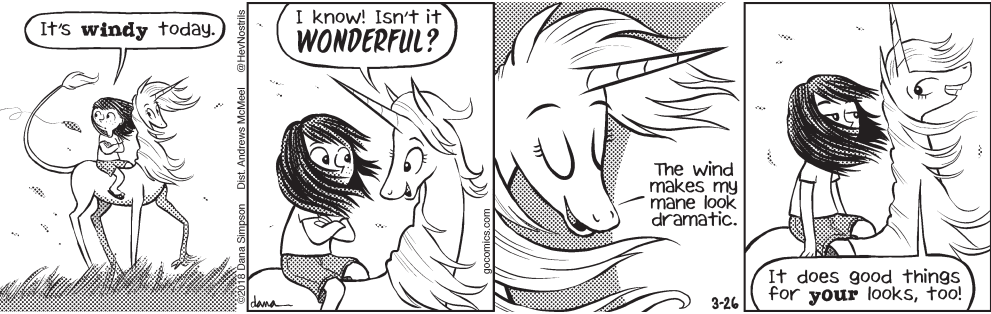
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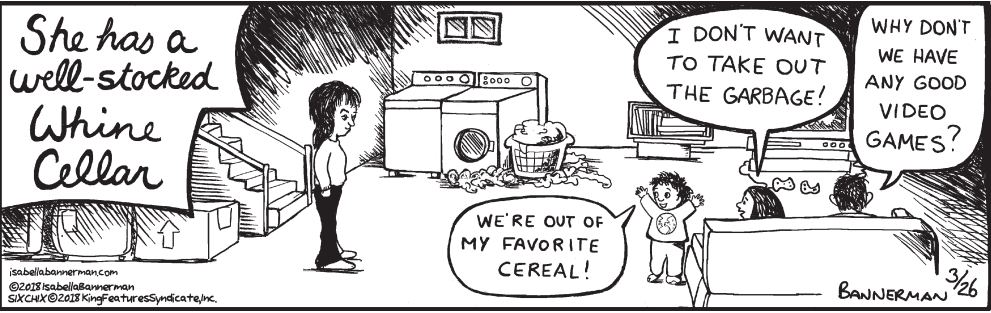
PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



LOLA



SIX CHIX



MUTTS



BABY BLUES



ZITS



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** If the enemy is within, so is the hero of this story, as well as all of the angels and champions and muses who help the plot along. Believe in yourself, and know that you're stronger than you think.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** You've many traits and characteristics that attract admirers. You'll favor the people who appreciate the part of you that is most authentically who you are and who you want to be.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** Most things you'll deal with today can't be rushed — or rather, they can be rushed, but it will ruin them. The day will go better when you accept things as ready when they're ready, not just ready when you want them to be.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** The desire for perfection is a prison. The need for acceptance is a prison. The shame of unrealized goals or past mistakes or current shortcomings — all prisons. You hold the keys. Break free.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Choose your target. If you narrow it down to one, you'll hit it. More ninja tips for a successful day: Only act when you're sure. And use what's in your environment to your best advantage.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Everything has a shelf life, but not everything comes marked with an expiration date. So when do you call it a day? When the risk of getting sick from a thing outweighs the benefit of having it.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Today's task is worth doing right. Look for a shortcut if you must, but you won't find one that's suitable. Any time saved will also be lessons not learned. Time to buckle in and take the main road.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Are you getting in too deep? Whether it's a swimming pool or an ocean, you can only occupy as much of it as you do. You'll have to tread water just the same. Don't worry about where the bottom is; just stay near the top.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** When you look around you'll see so many things you've acquired, some of which were hard-won, and maybe it's difficult to believe that you could still want more. But you do. Consider making a trade to lighten your load.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** One size definitely will not fit all, or even any. Seize the opportunity to custom fit what you do to the needs of another. What's in it for you? That will be a wonderful surprise.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Some are slaves to status and others claim they don't notice it and have no need for its symbols. The former is hard to tolerate, and the latter is hard to believe. You'll settle somewhere in the happy middle of the matter.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** If you wonder why so many seem to be one call away or even at arm's reach from you today, it's because your heart is open and radiating. All can feel the warm energy you project.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (March 27).** This solar return, your growing family will make you proud and your close relationships will be soul fortifying. Leverage one win into an even bigger one next month. You'll attract many opportunities through the summer and be in the enviable position of knowing what you want, keeping the best and weeding out the rest. Virgo and Taurus adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 3, 33, 37 and 14.

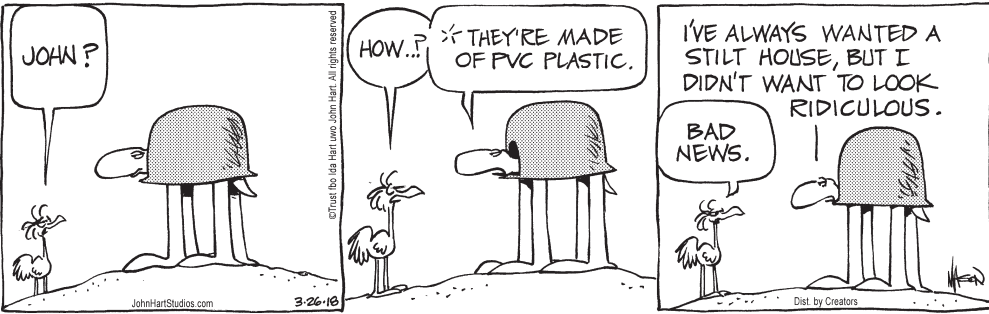
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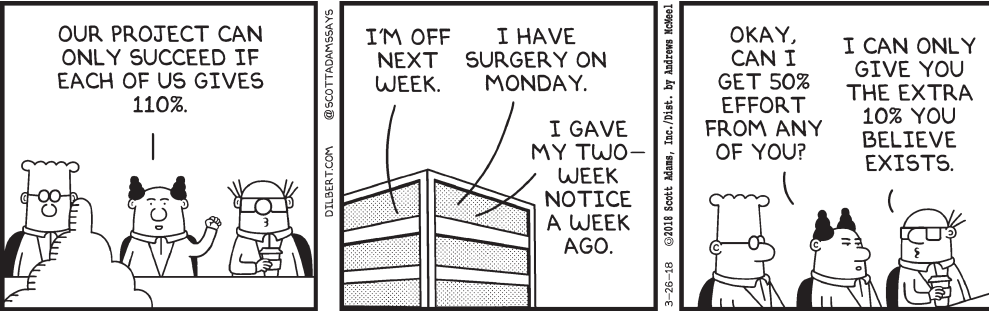
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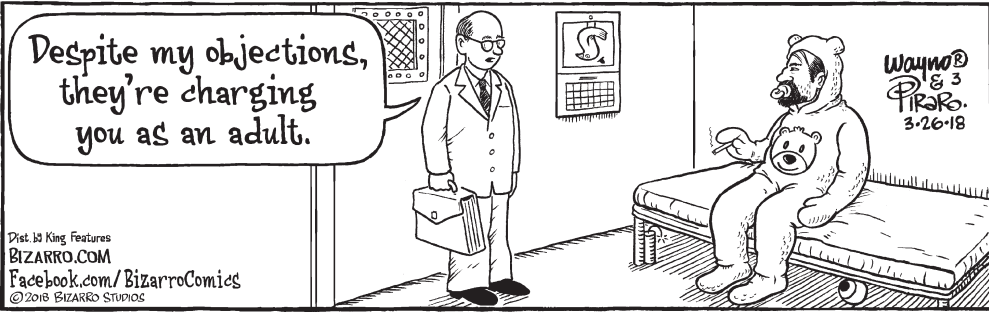
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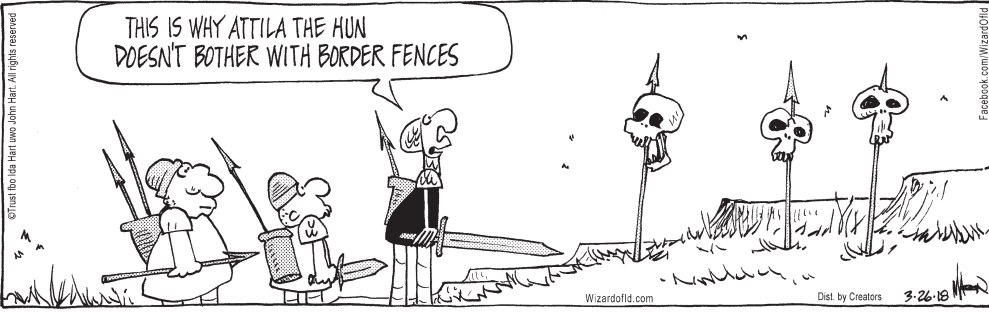
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ROSE IS ROSE

