

Hearing loss revisited

Dear Readers: Recently, I printed a letter from “Sad and Frustrated Beyond Words,” who was at her wits’ end with her husband, who has hearing loss but refuses to get help. I told her that she’s right that her husband should get his hearing checked but added that until he’s open to seeing a doctor, she should focus on her own mental health. I heard from many readers who have experience with hearing loss. I thought many of these responses contain valuable points, and I’d like to share some of their wisdom.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: Your reply to “Sad and Frustrated Beyond Words” is not helpful. I am a 65-year-old woman with hearing loss that began about seven years ago. Once I realized I had some hearing loss, I ran (I did not walk) to my ENT specialist and audiologist to seek help and hearing aids. Here’s why. Hearing loss does not just affect the person suffering from it. Hearing loss affects everyone with whom that person comes in contact. Your reader’s husband, who refuses to acknowledge his hearing loss, is

essentially saying, “It’s not my problem. It’s your problem.” That approach is simply ludicrous.

My mother, who lived with my dad’s worsening hearing for at least 10 years before he died, used to plead with Dad to get a hearing test. He refused to do so.

This woman is forced to live with someone who stubbornly refuses to take steps to be a good companion. Isn’t that a basic responsibility and pact between couples? Aren’t we supposed to demonstrate our love and respect for the other person with pleasant, helpful, considerate behavior? Aren’t we supposed to take steps to correct bad behaviors and habits that hurt our partners? Would you have the same opinion if this woman wrote to you that her husband refuses to bathe? Not addressing one’s hearing loss is, in my view, a form of passive abuse, and it demonstrates the person’s unwillingness to be a good partner.

The reader’s husband is unquestionably wrong in his refusal to acknowledge his hearing loss, and he may very likely lose his spouse as a consequence.

No amount of “meditation” will improve your reader’s life unless her husband takes steps to do something about his hearing. — *Hearing Is Everyone’s Problem*

Dear Hearing Is Everyone’s Problem: You’ve made me realize that perhaps my response to “Sad and Frustrated Beyond Words” was somewhat flip. Read on for yet another reason people with hearing loss should seek medical help.

Dear Annie: “Sad and Frustrated Beyond Words” might want to tell her husband that it could possibly cause cognitive decline if he can’t hear her or anyone else. I believe that years of not hearing anyone is part of the reason my mother developed Alzheimer’s disease. If you can’t have a conversation, then your brain isn’t getting any stimulation and will eventually shut down. — *Been There*

Dear Been There: You’re absolutely right. According to hearing experts from Johns Hopkins, “older adults with hearing loss are more likely to develop problems thinking and remembering than older adults whose hearing is normal.” Thanks for writing.

TOMORROW’S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Situations are not stressful in their own right. It is our assessment and interpretation that drives the stress levels we experience. Thought of the day: There is always another interpretation.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The bigger picture will not be served if you change the rules for every individual request. Stick to the rules and the structures today. If you make an exception for one person, then you’ll have to make it for all people.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Sacrifice is always the necessary trade for things of value — no sacrifice, no value. Instant gratification isn’t free. It will be paid for eventually. Oddly enough, those who get used to sacrifice begin to actually enjoy it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Human beings behave irrationally. This is the rule, not the exception. A lot of time and energy get wasted complaining about irrational things other humans do. Conserve your energy by expecting surprising problems.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You’ll come up with a plan. They won’t like it. Some, in fact, would rally against it if they knew what it was. So, it’s a good thing they don’t. Keep it like that for a while.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). If you set out on the journey ill-prepared and unsure, you’ll be beginning the way most beginners do. This is the magic (and fun!) of being a beginner — inadequate means and imperfect odds of success.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). When you find yourself arguing with the basic tenants of society — the way people dress, talk or drive — it’s a sign that you’re due for some “me time,”

resting, breathing and stretching in more than just physical ways.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). There are those who know exactly what they want, and they are very likely to get it. Though what happens after that may be that they want something else. After all, states of satisfaction can only last so long.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You’ll hear from an old friend. You might be surprised by different people’s trajectories, and they might be surprised about yours. Surprise can be life affirming. There is always more to know.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). “Would you?” is a very different question from “will you?” And while you’ll gather some interesting information from the “would you?” question, all that matters in the end is the “will you?” question.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). One behavior will not suit all outcomes. For instance, what you do to create trust is different from what you do to elicit desire. Decide on what you want to accomplish and work backward.

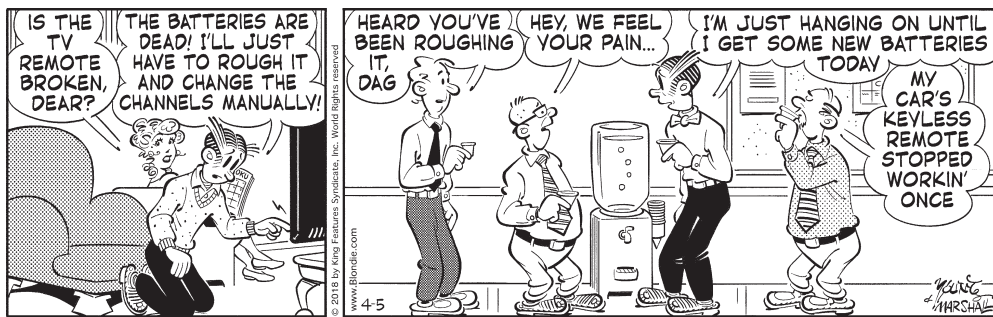
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). When people are doing a certain thing to fit in with the environment and you don’t feel compelled to do the same thing, consider the very fun, adventurous possibility that you might be better suited to a different environment.

TOMORROW’S BIRTHDAY (April 6). The solar return has so many gifts for you — a new way of thinking, a better place to work and a chance to make a difference in the world. Family bands together for a common cause. Your investment in another person will prove to be the best way to learn and grow. Your curiosity will lead to a beautiful alliance. Gemini and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 40, 22, 11 and 9.

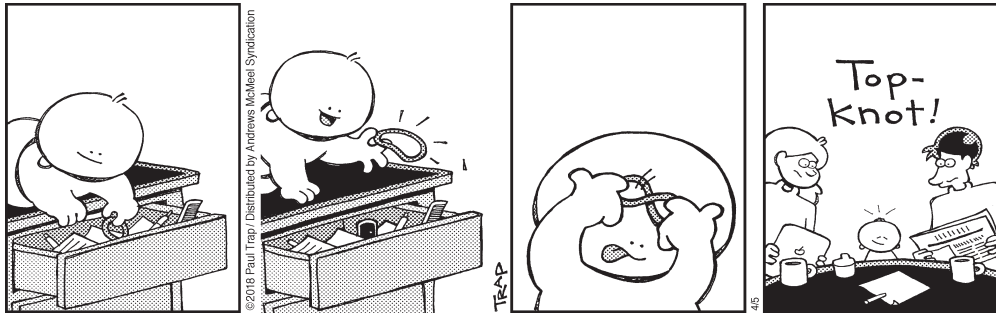
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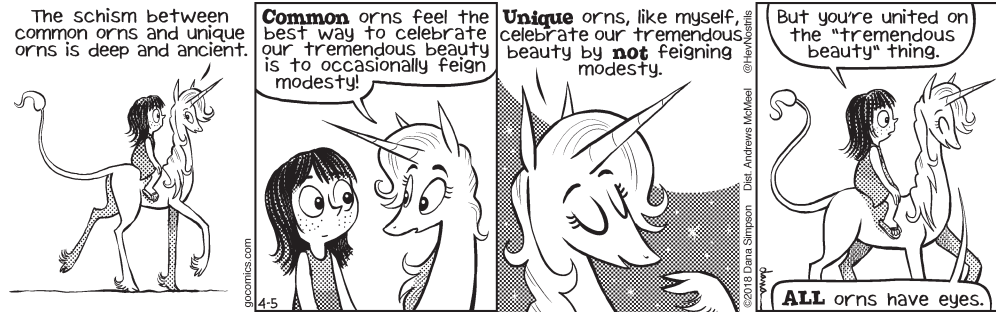
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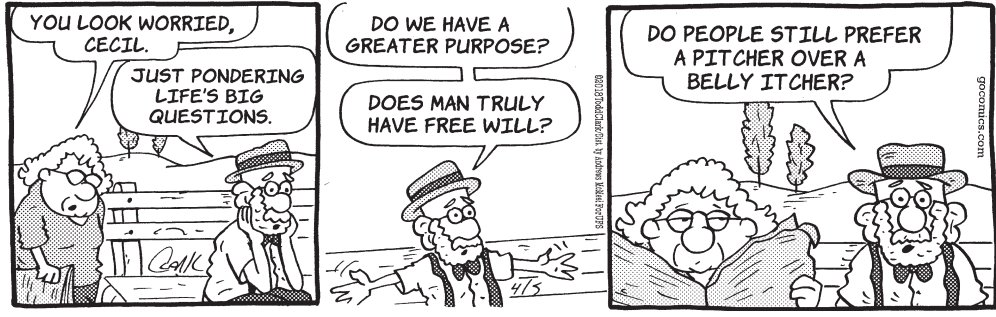
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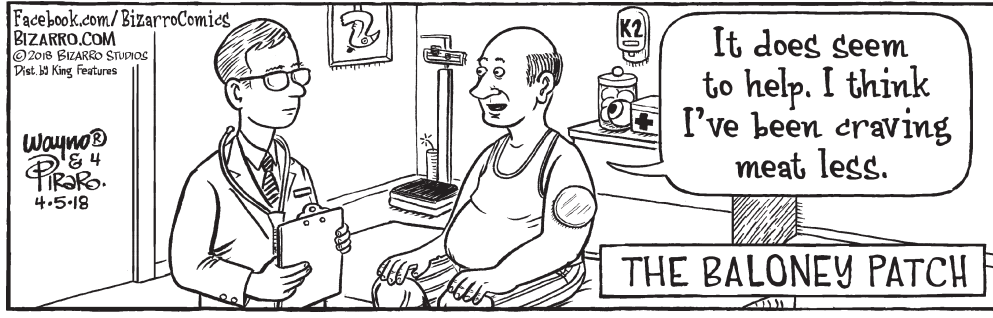
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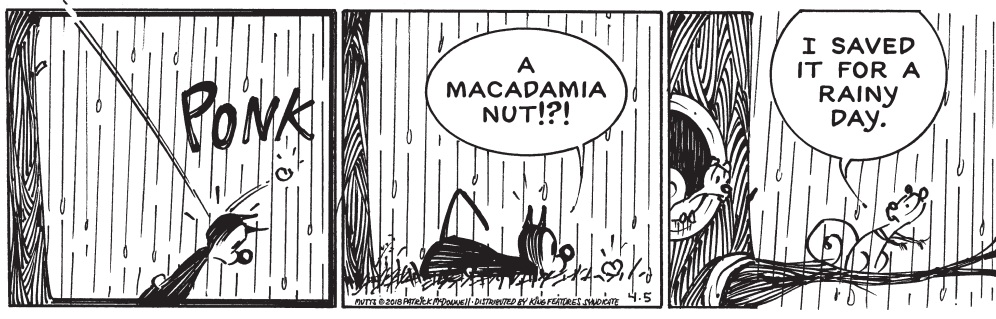
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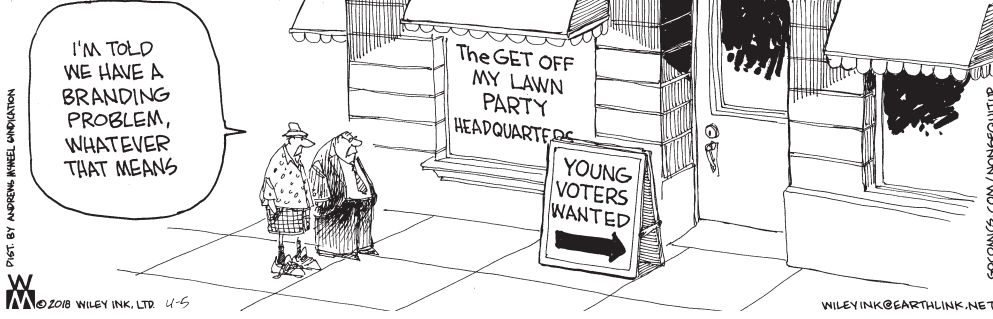
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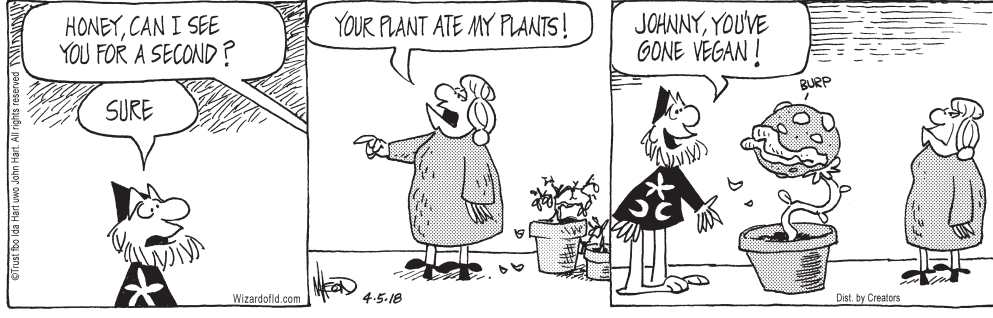
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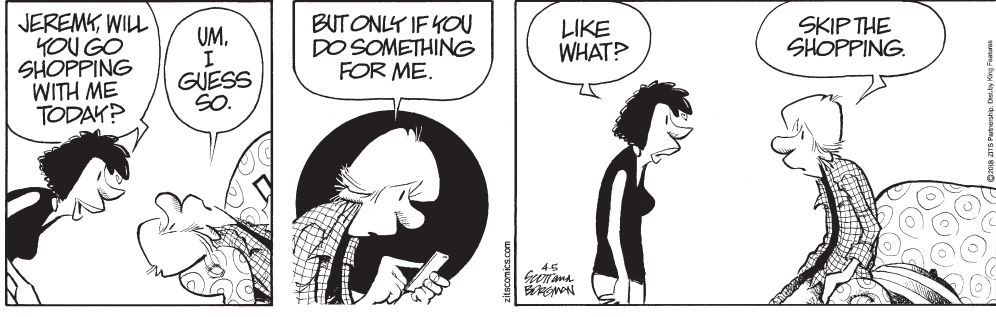
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