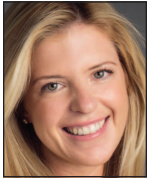


Dealing with depression

Dear Annie: I'm a man in my late 40s living with my 40-year-old girlfriend of five years. I just found out she's been dealing with depression for years. She is on medication for it, but maybe it's not helping. Today is the fourth straight day she hasn't gotten out of bed, let alone gone to work. Of course, my main concern is her and her health, but now I'm starting to worry about our income. Our budget is pretty tight as it is, and I don't make enough money at my job to support us both. So now I'm really worried about her and the reality that our bills may not get paid. I would never talk to her about my concerns; I don't want to add any stress to her. I want to do what's right. I want to do what's best for her and what's best for us. I want to continue being with her, but I'm getting dangerously close to full panic mode. Could you give me some advice on how to handle this situation? — *Panic Mode*

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Dear Panic Mode: I know that this situation is hard, but it's not hopeless. Depression is not something one can will her way out of, so be patient. Though it's ultimately up to your girlfriend to want to seek

help, you're in a position to provide encouragement. The most important thing you can do right now is get her to a doctor. If she seems like a danger to herself, dial 911. If you're not sure how to assess the situation, you can also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, at 800-273-8255. Trained crisis workers are there to take your call 24/7.

In addition to helping her over the initial hurdle of seeking professional help, you can play an active role in her recovery long term. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, "mental health professionals are increasingly recommending couple- and family-based treatment programs," sometimes even enlisting partners as co-therapists who can assist with "homework" they assign to their patients. You can find more tips by visiting <https://adaa.org> and entering the phrase "spouse or partner" into the search bar.

Regarding the financial aspect, if your partner's depression has been documented, she might qualify to receive money from the Supplemental Security Income program or Social Security Disability

Insurance. Visit <https://www.ssa.gov> or make an appointment at your local Social Security office for more information.

Dear Annie: My husband always carries a handkerchief, as many men do. When he sneezes, blows his nose or just needs to wipe it, he pulls out his hankie, uses it and then folds it back up neatly and puts it back in his pocket. It is always when we are at Mass or at a restaurant. I cringe, get all sweaty and shake my head. What does etiquette dictate that one do after using a hankie? I never notice other men folding theirs after using them. Am I being too critical? — *Yuck*

Dear Yuck: The proper etiquette for blowing one's nose, whether into a handkerchief or into a tissue, is to do so in the privacy of the bathroom (though that might be hard during Mass). As for your husband's folding the handkerchief after using it — yes, it seems a bit odd, because he should launder it soon after using it. It'd be like folding dirty clothes for the hamper. But I'm afraid it's his handkerchief, his pocket and his rules. Perhaps it's time to get a handkerchief of your own for when this habit starts you sweating. In all seriousness, try to let this one go.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Your loved ones, bosses and colleagues are all looking for the same thing. They want to see effort. They need the assurance that someone cares. You'll be someone's saving grace.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Don't forget to play. Play is where the best stuff of the day happens. Play is where you'll discover who a person really is. Play will show you things about yourself you didn't know.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Your power is growing because you're ready and willing to take on more. Though you have many supporters, expect some resistance, too. Just because someone is intimidated doesn't mean you are intimidating.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It is often the case that compassionate people got that way via life's disappointments and injustices. Because they moved through bad times, they are more capable of helping others through their suffering.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). When people want what isn't good for them, as will be the case today, giving them what they want isn't going to help anything. For best results, apply your own judgment to the actions you take on behalf of others.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You'll be steadfast in your flow of positive energy. Some people will seem determined to derail your sunshine agenda, and those people are not to be taken on. Ignore them instead. Refuse to be defeated by transient concerns.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). True happiness is impossible to achieve in isolation. You cannot be truly happy when others are suffering. You're connected to all of humanity, and you

feel that connection in a visceral way today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Though it is possible to experience an easy or even accidental victory, real triumph belongs to the enduring. So don't be shaken by the easy wins of others. Stay the course. Yours is coming.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Spiritual evolution is work. For instance, to think benevolently about people even if you don't particularly agree with (or even like) them is to operate on a higher level. You have this in you.

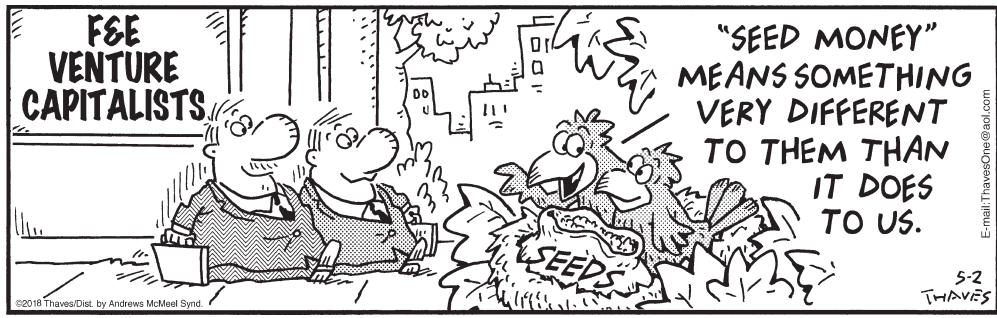
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You can direct loving feelings toward yourself and then extend them outward, or direct loving feelings toward another then soak them up. Either way, you'll cultivate and share a warm safe environment.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Today you will give second chances. It's what you would want were the situation reversed. Also, it just feels better to do this, even if part of you doesn't quite think it's going to work out. You'll always know you were generous.

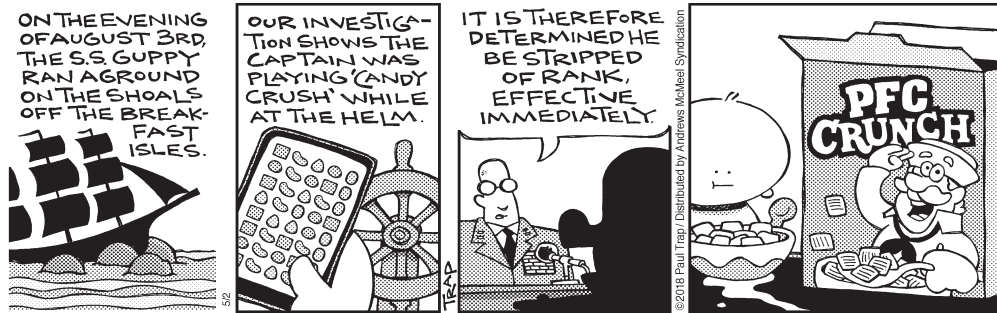
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You believe in people's capacity to improve. It's why you're a terrific coach. You also know when to detach. You don't demand people be a certain way to earn your respect. You just respect them and hope for the best.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (May 3). A group will grow and improve because of your contribution. These are the meaningful moments you've been working toward! You'll make good on a promise, and it will burst open an exciting trajectory. There's real brilliance in your ability to elicit expert feedback and apply it until you get the answer. Libra and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 8, 20, 27 and 33.

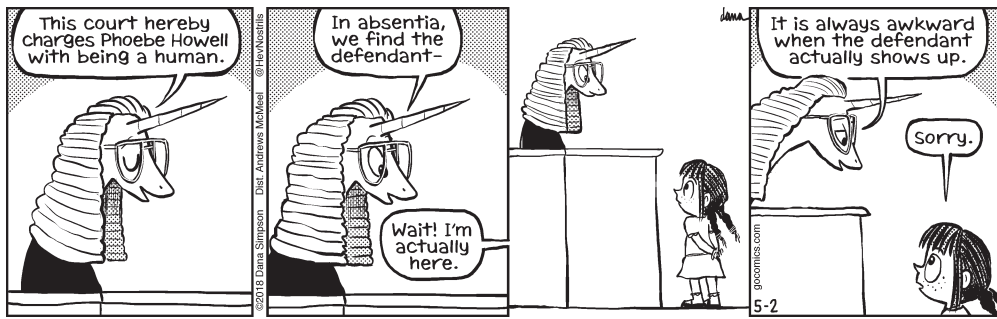
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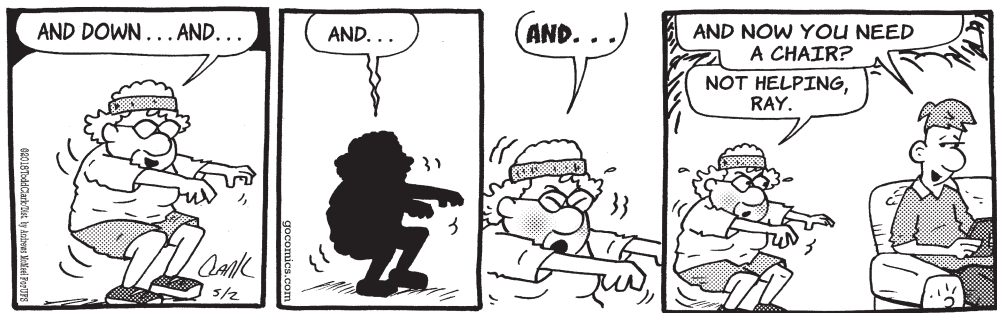
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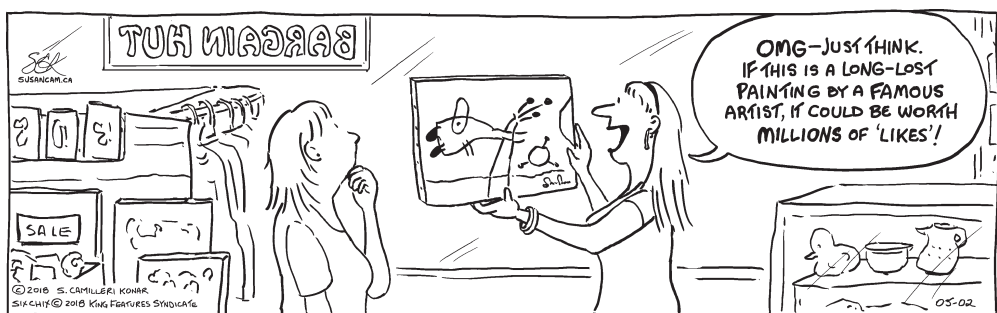
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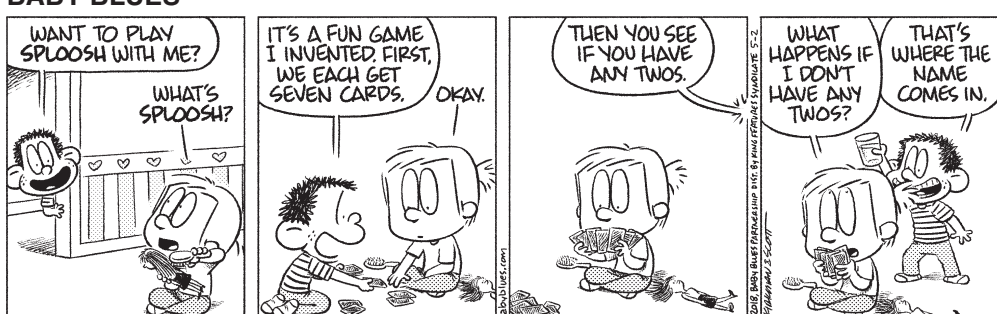
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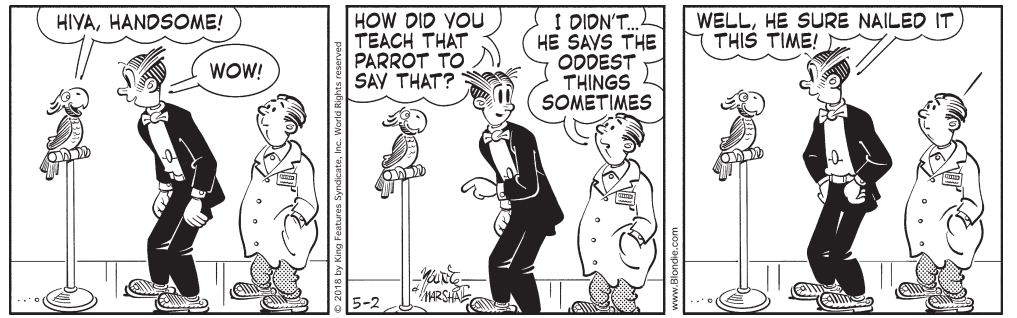
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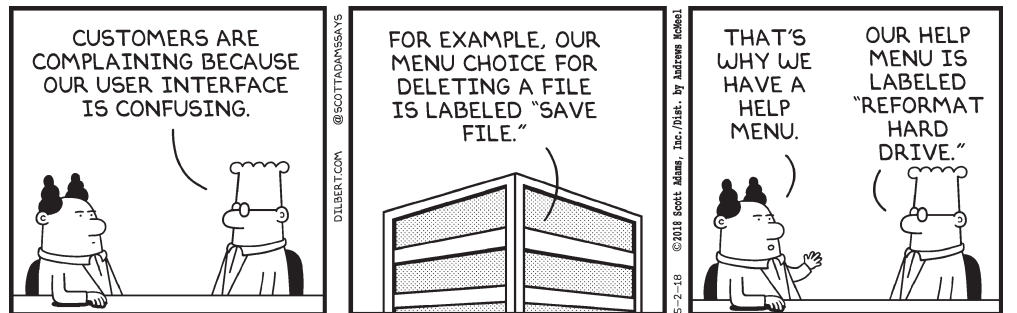
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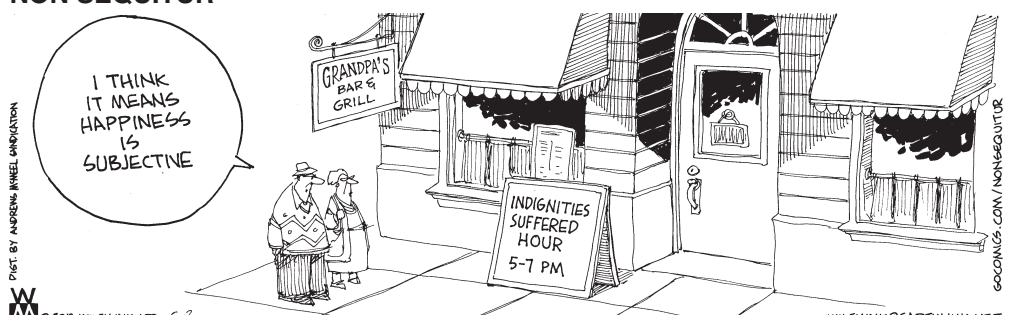
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