

How to go about helping a friend?

Dear Annie: I have a friend who is going through a tough time, and I am wondering how I can help her.

She was a single mother who raised two daughters and a son on her own. I am still amazed at how she provided a safe and loving home for her children all by herself. Her daughters are married and living in different states with their families. Her 40-year-old son was also married; however, he went through a nasty divorce last year and moved back to live with my friend. He is currently unemployed. His car was recently rear-ended. When the police arrived, they smelled alcohol on his breath and gave him a Breathalyzer test. He was found to be legally drunk and was arrested. This was the start of a huge financial and emotional burden for my friend.

She calls me crying several times a week because she is so worried about her situation and about her son. As someone looking in from the outside, I feel that he could be depressed because his marriage ended and he con-

tinues to experience drama when dealing with his ex-wife. I think he could benefit from counseling, but I feel uncomfortable telling her this because of the financial burden she is already feeling.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
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Aside from being a shoulder to cry on, is there anything else I could do? She is a lovely lady, and I want to help, but this situation has made me feel helpless as a friend. — *Helpless in Hot Springs*

Dear Helpless in Hot Springs: Your mere presence is more help than you could ever know. A shoulder to cry on is an invaluable thing to offer a friend.

Because you two are so close, it wouldn't be inappropriate for you to suggest that her son might benefit from therapy. Mental health care is not necessarily the huge financial burden that many assume it is. Therapy websites, such as BetterHelp and Talkspace, offer individual care from licensed therapists starting at about \$35 a week, and if her son has Medicaid, he can look for covered providers at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/medicaid>.

Dear Annie: I'm writing to you about an issue I've never seen addressed in this column. As my daughter and new son-in-law opened their wedding cards, they received one from a cousin who attended the wedding. The card was empty, with no gift card or check inside. Do we send a thank-you note for "sharing our special day with us" and the beautiful card? We know it's a guest's choice to give a gift, but what if the cousin intended to put a cash gift in the card and then forgot? And she is expecting a thank-you card? It's a funny situation. How should we handle it? — *Left Wandering*

Dear Left Wandering: She most likely didn't forget to include the gift, and if she did, she'd remember on her own soon enough. Perhaps she's just not in a position to give a gift right now and wanted to send a card to at least recognize the special occasion. I'd leave it be.

A side note: You asked, "Do we send a thank-you note?" I hope you don't mean that you're writing the thank-you notes for your daughter and son-in-law.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Preferences don't automatically make a thing superior or inferior. A better fit doesn't mean a thing is objectively a better item; it's just a better item for the person it fits.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Stories have big power, but only if they are believed. If they are told well, they often are believed whether or not they are true. That's why it's important to ask, "Who stands to gain from this?" about every story you hear.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). This is the kind of day when "just do it" applies best. If you're reasonably sure the action will benefit all (or at least that it will harm none) go ahead. If you waste time explaining or asking permission, you'll miss your chance.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Would you rather learn from experience or gain from experience? It's a trick question. To learn is to gain. And when you apply the learning, you'll find it's worth more than gold.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Because you expect more of yourself than most people do, it sometimes feels like you're failing on a larger scale. But you're much further along than you would be had you not taken on such a big challenge. Cut yourself some slack.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). In theory, you can work on your inner life through meditation, reading, selfless service and education. Would it surprise you if enjoyment, pleasure and self-interest also lead to mental improvement?

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The helium of emotion is so weightless you're not even aware you're carrying it around with you. And yet, when you encounter those who need your compassion, you have plenty to give.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). There have been times in your life when you were unhappy but couldn't pinpoint the source. Today will bring the opposite experience. Where is this happiness coming from? Don't ask. Just go with it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The company you keep will not only affect the outcome of your projects today, it will also change you at your core. Happy, supportive people will remind you to smile and accept yourself.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). A change of venue can make a big difference to your productivity. Maybe you can't cut out distractions, but being around a different set of them will work, too. Test this theory. Take your work on the road, or take it home.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You want to be welcoming and open, but then again, there's something to be said for making people work for it. Your attention is worth working for, after all, and they will today.

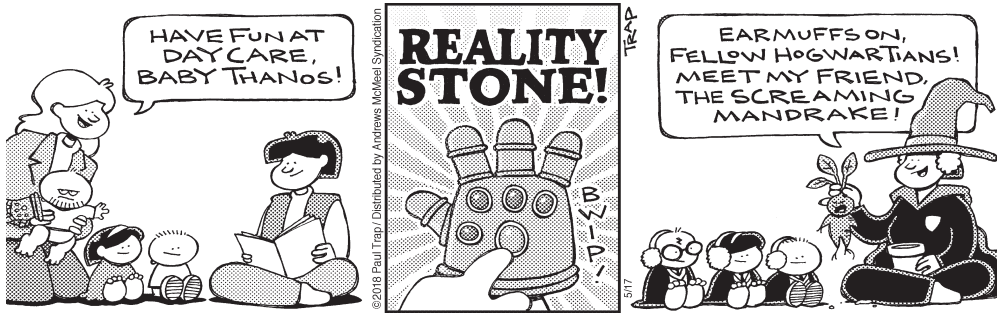
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're not driven by other people's opinions. It's your own story that drives you. You want that narrative to be great, and its greatness doesn't depend on the completion, only on your own ability to rise.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (May 18). Success is now. It's not something that's hanging from the trophies of the future; it's a satisfaction that comes at the end of today's mile marker. Remember this and the solar return will bring you abundance beyond your childhood fantasies. The luckiest months financially will be September and November. Libra and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 30, 4, 41, 7 and 14.

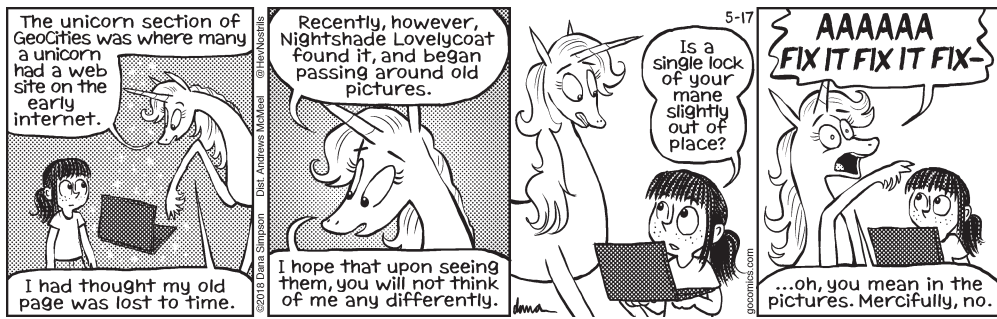
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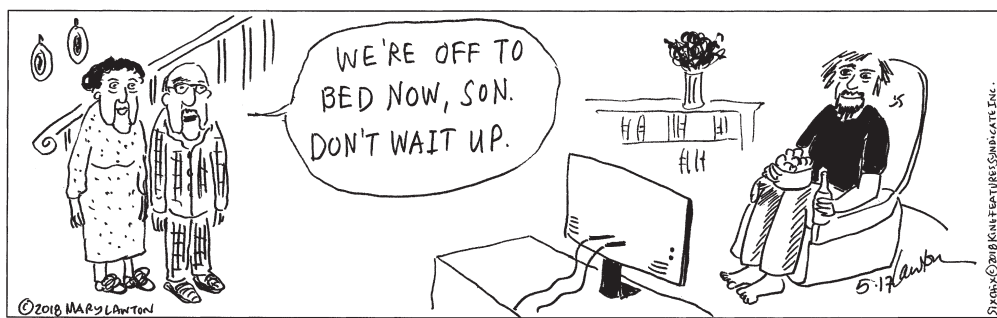
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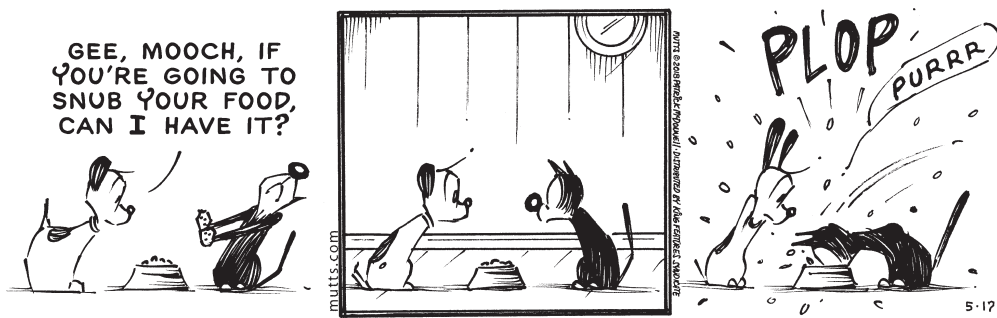
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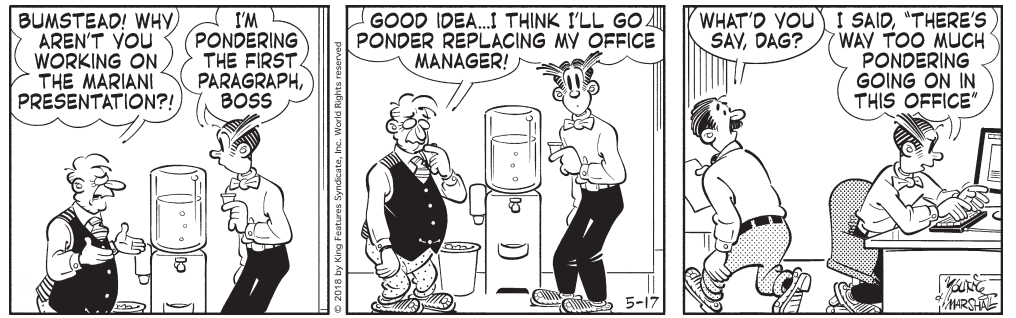
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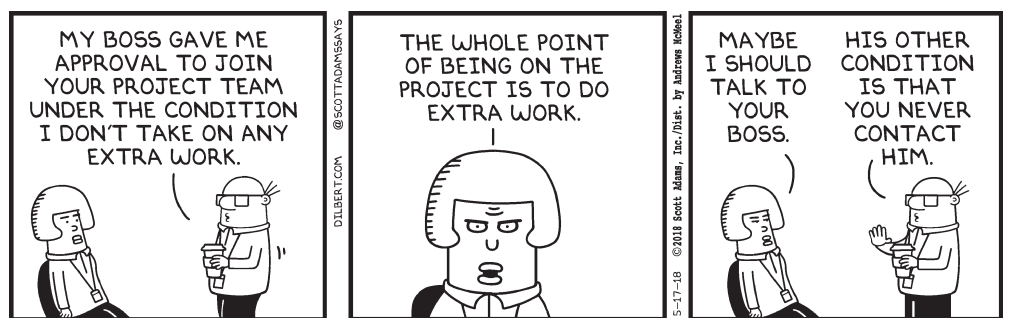
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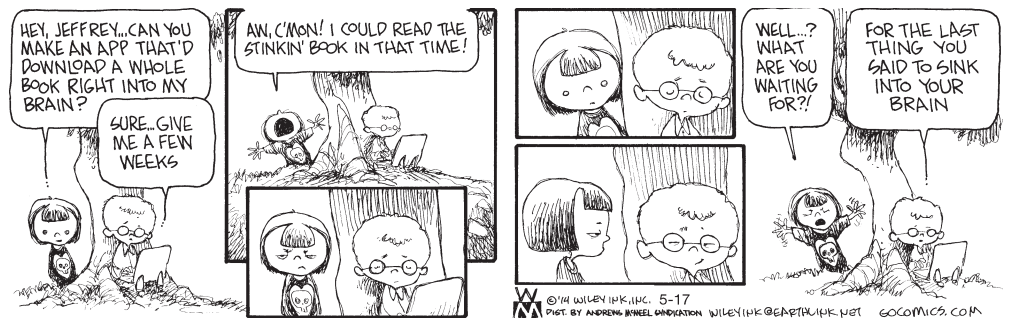
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