

Keep him in voicemail

Dear Annie: I am in a quandary about a situation. I am a widow. Sometime after my late husband passed away, an old friend and I renewed our friendship. At first, things were very pleasant, and I enjoyed his company. This gentleman was divorced. I believe that his former wife had an affair. I don't think he ever worked through the feelings of rejection he must have felt. He has a great deal of suppressed anger, and at times he seems to have a dual personality. I realized the friendship was not a healthy one, and we no longer see each other. I have not seen him in years.

I guess it's important to him to keep in touch by phone, and he'll call from time to time to check on me. If I'm not available to answer the phone, he'll leave a curt remark in my voicemail.

He called this week as I was packing up some boxes for Goodwill, and I could not answer the phone in time. He left a sarcastic voice message. He called four times back to back. I did not return the calls.

I don't enjoy talking to him. It's usually a rather one-sided conversation, with him talking about

things of no consequence. He doesn't have a good outlook on life. I recently found out he is an alcoholic, and he lies and exaggerates things. His calls upset me.

I don't want to change my land-line number or my cellphone number. Should I continue letting his calls go to voicemail? I wish him well, but it really would be best for us not to have a telephone friendship.

— *Feeling Guilty*

Dear Feeling Guilty: That man's disease is the one leaving you curt messages, and you're wise for not returning the calls. Continue letting his calls go to voicemail, and don't bother listening to the messages. You might also want to call your phone provider to see about blocking his number, if you'd rather not let his vitriol take up space on your voicemail. I really hope he seeks help with his alcoholism, but he has to come to that point on his own. You have nothing for which to feel guilty.

Dear Annie: I read the letter today from "Beat Him to the Punch Too Soon," the lady who told her amazing boyfriend she was falling in love with him. I did the same thing when I was dating my husband,

"Tom." I wish I could tell her to relax and let things develop organically. I think we can all be guilty of letting our feelings get ahead of the natural process of falling in love. When I was a teenager, my mom always said I was just in love with love; there was a different guy to pine over routinely.

After getting over the embarrassment and the anxiety of telling Tom my feelings, I let it go and embraced the process of dating and just enjoyed getting to know him better and spending time with him. I am so thankful I did. He told me he loved me seven months later. Things moved quickly after that, and we married that same year. The experiences we had while dating are some of the best memories I have. They built a wonderful foundation for what has so far been a fabulous marriage. It's a second marriage for both of us, and I'm eternally grateful that I learned to be patient.

— *Second Time's a Charm*

Dear Second Time's a Charm: I'm printing your letter as reassurance for "Beat Him to the Punch Too Soon" and anyone else who might be fretting over having said those three little words a little too early. It's not a relationship breaker. Congrats and best wishes to you and your husband.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Astronomers now believe that gold and heavy elements in the universe are the result of neutron star collisions. Similarly, a remarkable conflict you've been through has given you something rare, beautiful and valuable.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Remind yourself of the good you've done. When you slip, it's a momentary forgetting of your true trajectory, which is one, headed up and up, of compassion and glory.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). People will behave in a peculiar manner. Something is definitely afoot. Learn of it. That you are observant is a gift to all, as so many are too selfish to even know the mystery is in the offering.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Find your knowledge counterpart. Find the person who knows what there is to know, and you'll cover the rest, or vice versa. The wise are sometimes the least knowledgeable.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Today, the smallest action can cause terrible or wonderful circumstances for another person. Your sense of personal responsibility will help you make a positive difference.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It's very difficult to assess character under ideal and public circumstances. Anyone can act like they're doing the right thing in church or other societal structures. Character is what a person does when left to his or her own devices.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Debts will be settled. Pay what you owe and collect what's owed to you. As long as there's agreement on the terms, today's transactions will be smooth and convenient for all.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). In regards to projects, dates and canoe rides, it goes smoothly when one person is designated to steer. Decide who it is and stick to that decision for the remainder of the journey.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Today will be like testing day at school. A high level of focus will be required. As long as everyone rises to the occasion, each with eyes exclusively on his or her own paper, all will be well.

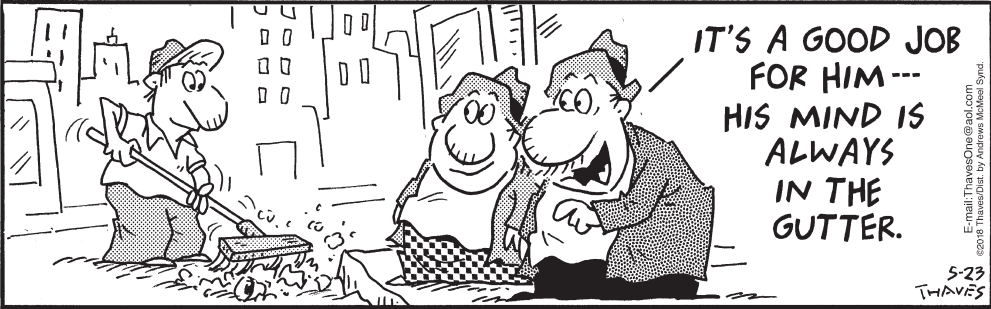
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You'll join forces to build something cool — maybe an actual structure or more likely a process to accomplish a shared goal. Your choice of project will determine the people you'll be hanging around.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Sometimes you don't know what you've bottled up until you talk it out. Then again, different people bring out different sides of you. Not all that comes out represents who you are or your true feelings.

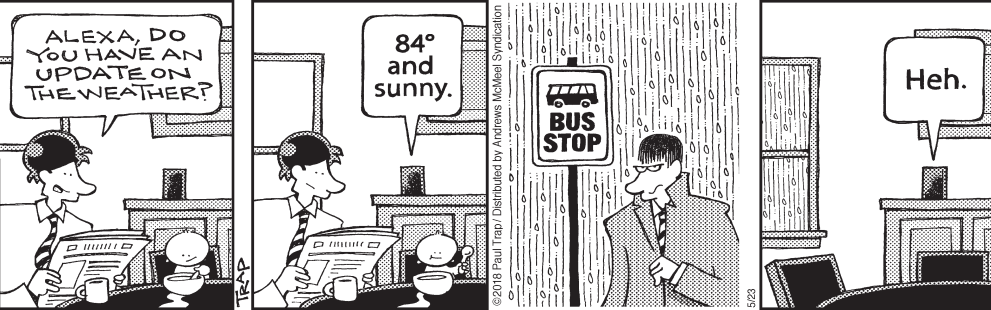
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The word is filled with people of varied preferences and tolerances. Because of this, no one can be everyone's cup of tea. You're comfortable with who you are, so you don't need everyone to like you.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (May 24). This solar return will be marked by your fascination with the inner workings of things, people and more. You'll absorb so much that by this time next year you'll be navigating your life differently just to integrate all you've learned. Ask for more than you feel you should when the deal is on the table in October. Cancer and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 3, 20, 1, 5 and 17.

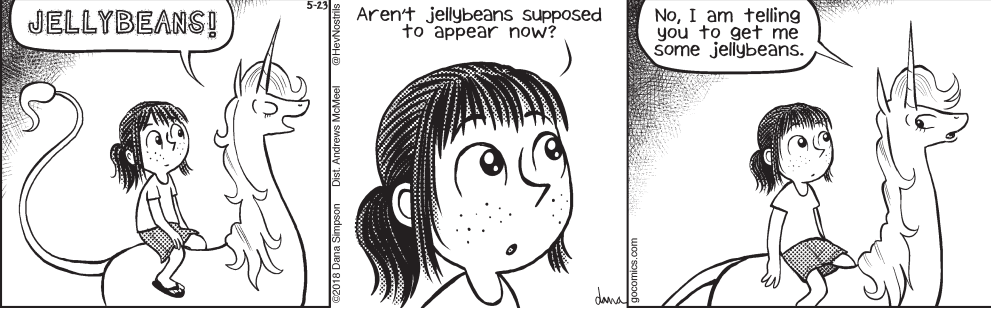
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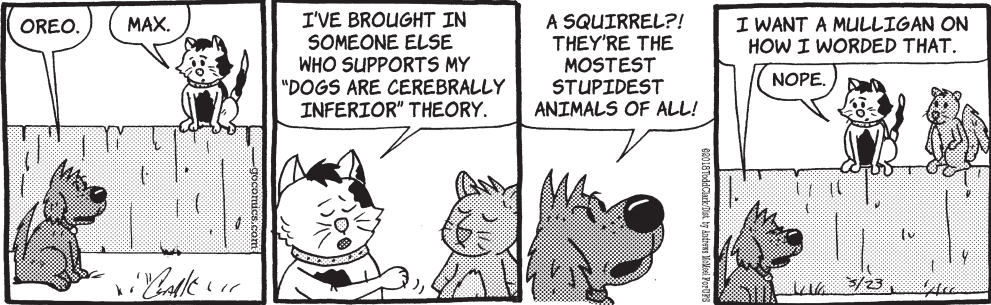
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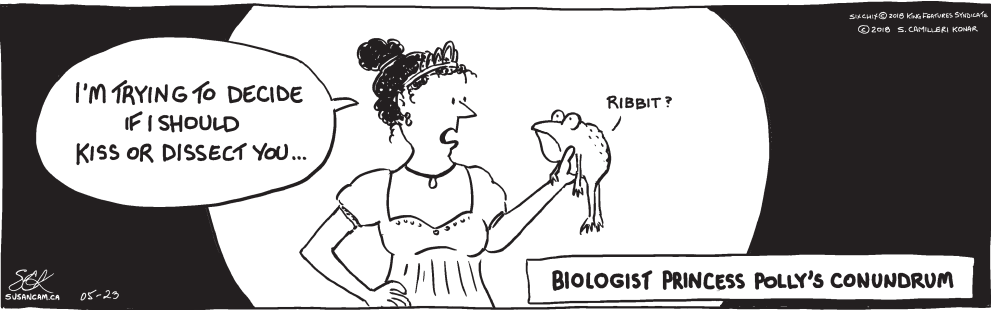
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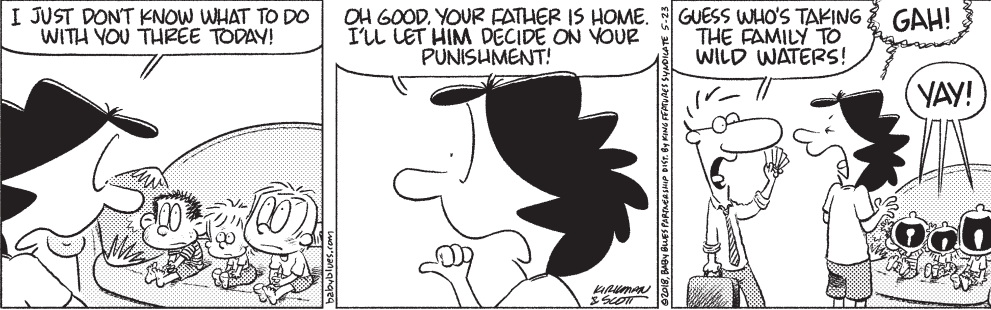
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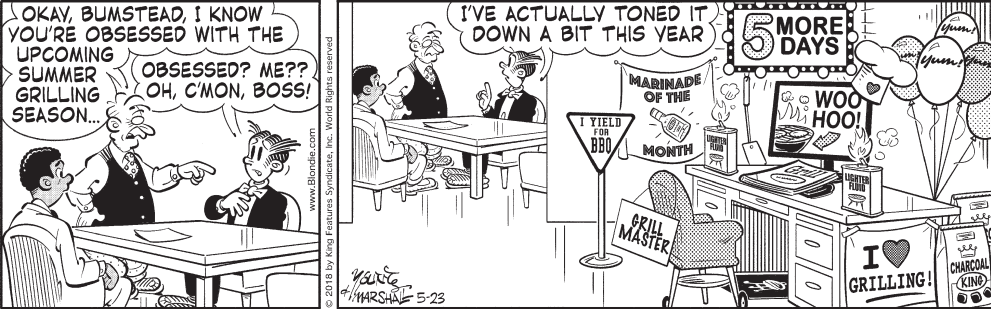
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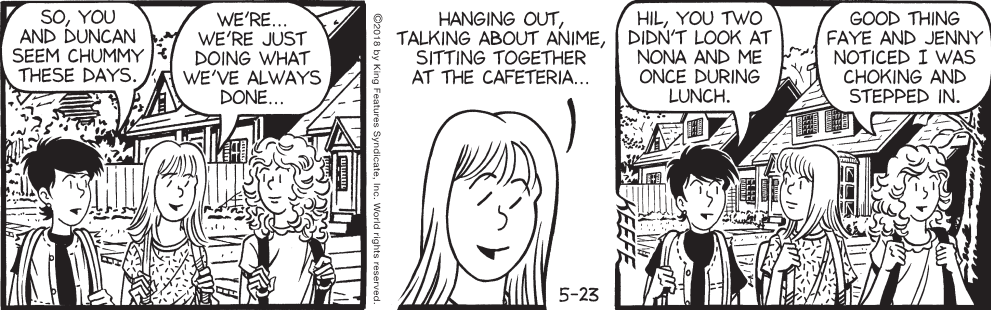
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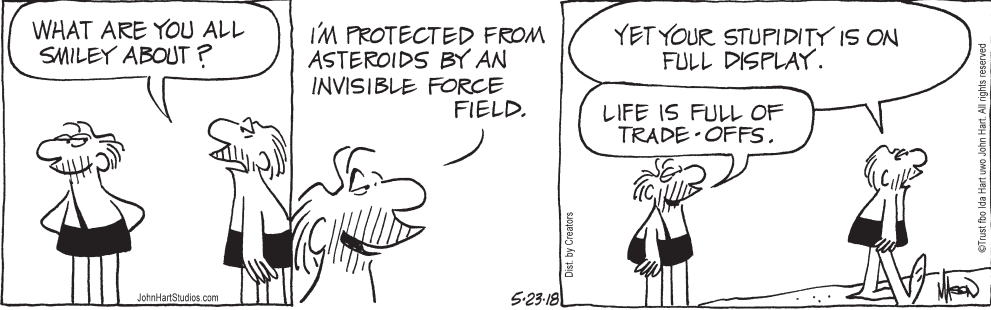
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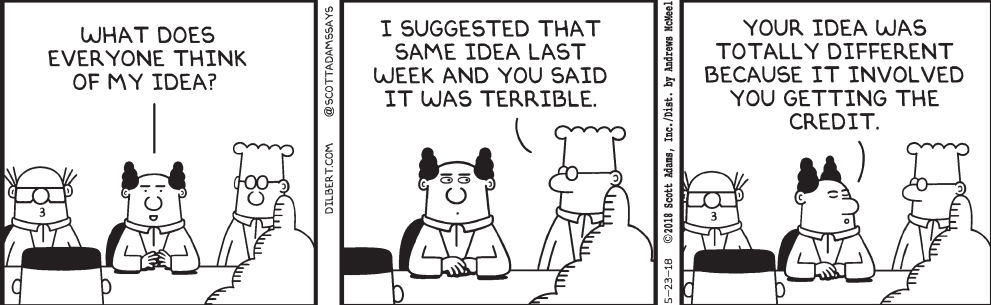
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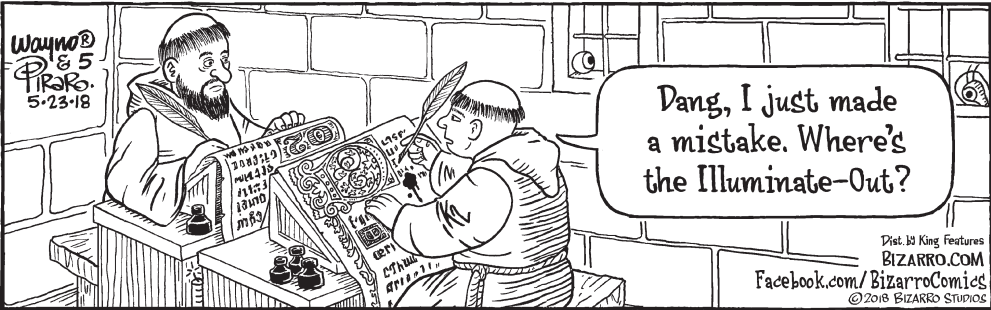
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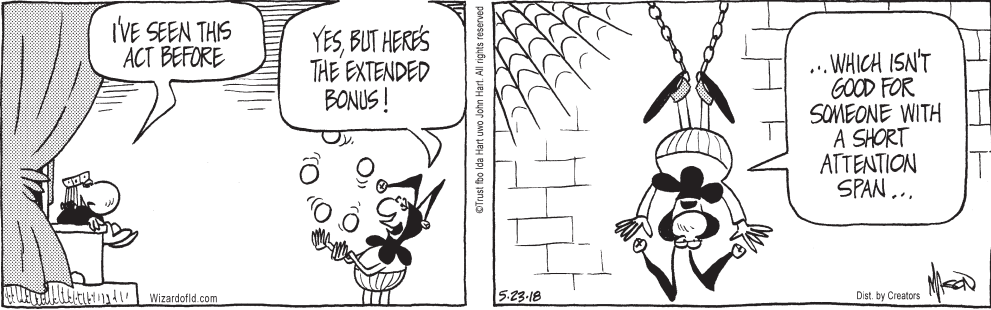
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