

Problematic relationship

Dear Annie: Last fall, my friend “Olive” and her boyfriend of five years, “John,” broke up. Of course, I wasn’t happy to see her going through the tough emotions that come with any breakup, but man, I sure was happy to see that guy out of the picture. He was a jerk. He cheated on her multiple times and hardly let her see her friends. The rare times she got to see any of her friends, John would text her after an hour (sometimes less), saying it was getting late and she should come home. He would even come pick her up sometimes if she didn’t respond. Anyway, I was practically doing Snoopy dances when they ended things in November, and our mutual friends felt the same way.

For about six months afterward, Olive was way more social than she had been. She spent more time with friends and started taking a class at the local community college. In short, she seemed to be living her best life. She even started seeing another guy about three months ago. He was incredibly sweet and head over heels for her.

I think you can guess by now where this letter is headed. About a month ago, Olive started flaking on our plans at the last minute and tex-

ting less frequently. Last week, she texted me that she and John were back together. She’d moved back in to his place already and everything.

Annie, I’m so frustrated by this news, but I’m not sure what to do. I’m supposed to see Olive next weekend (provided she doesn’t flake). I don’t want to give her a hard time, but I also don’t want to pretend I think it’s fine she’s back with John. Whenever he cheated on her in the past, she would tell me things such as, “All men cheat. They can’t help it.” It seems obvious she’s just trying to rationalize his behavior. I don’t want to nod along when she says that stuff, but

I don’t want to get into an argument with her about it, either. How can I help her see things clearly? — *Wanting to Be a Good Friend*

Dear Wanting to Be a Good Friend: Olive and John’s relationship sounds unhealthy at best and abusive at worst. I completely understand your frustration, but try your best to be patient. If this is an abusive relationship, then it’s important for her to know she’s got a friend standing by to offer support when she finally is ready to leave. You might try inviting her to more group outings instead of making

one-on-one plans. That way, you won’t be too put out if she cancels, and she’ll know she’s still part of the group.

For more information on helping friends in abusive relationships, visit <http://www.thehotline.org>. Click the “Get Help” tab, and view the page “Help for Friends and Family.”

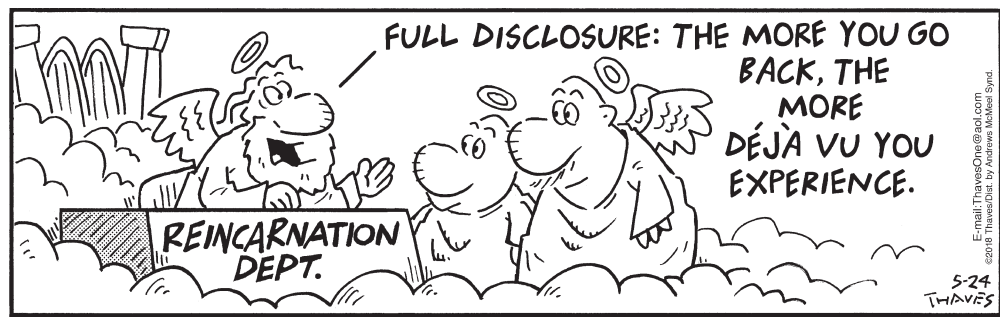
Dear Annie: You recently published two letters from office workers who asked for assistance in approaching a co-worker with objectionable body odors. Your suggestions were valid, and the admonition to shower before work was good, but that may not be enough. Body odor isn’t always caused by a lack of hygiene. Some medications, some medical conditions, cigarette smoking and what a person eats can contribute. In college, I had a roommate who exuded very objectionable smells almost immediately after a shower and deodorant application. He was a smoker, but the stale smell of cigarettes was not the odor emitted. So your advice should have suggested looking for some internal condition that could be the root cause of the problem. — *G.S.*

Dear G.S.: You make a great point. Diabetes, kidney and liver dysfunction, and rare genetic disorders can also cause body odor. If good hygiene practices aren’t getting at the source, it’s best to talk with your doctor.

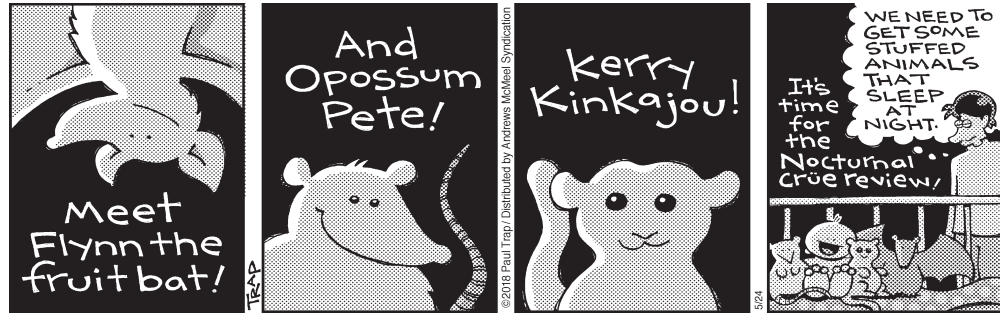


Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

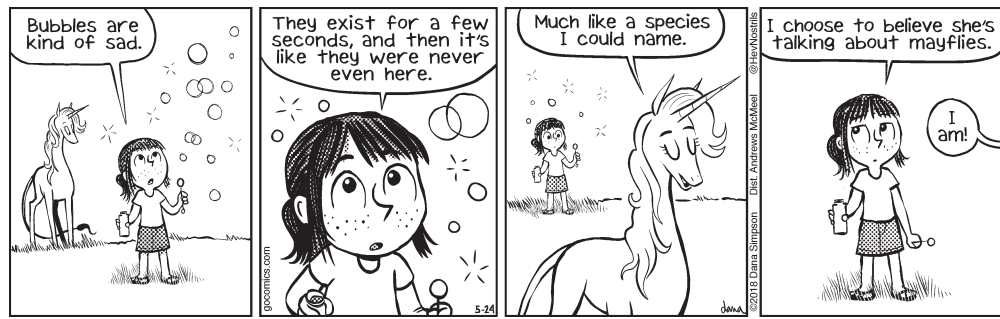
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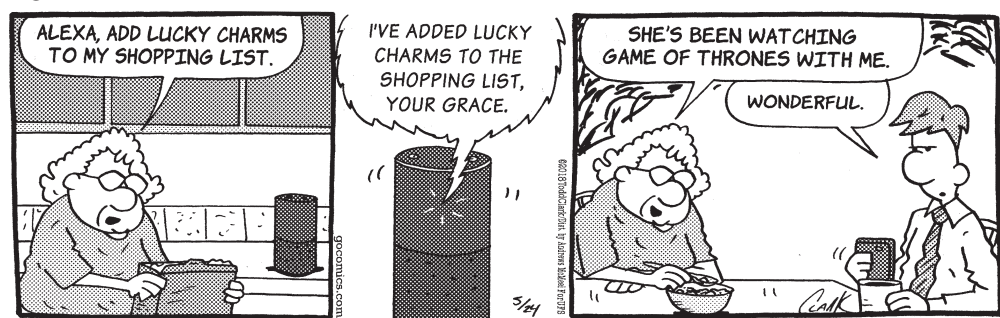
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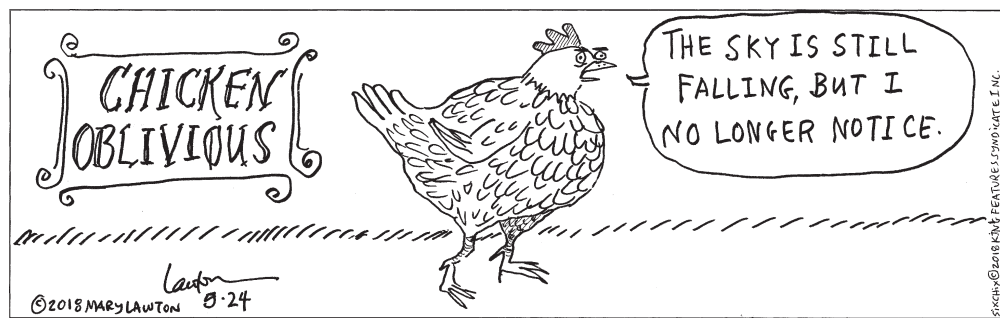
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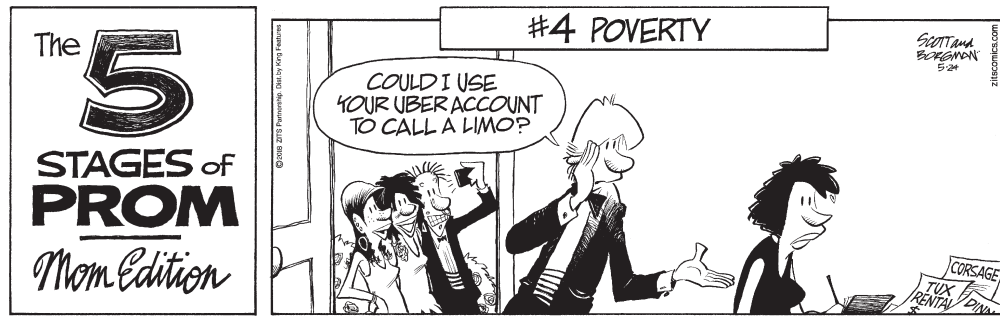
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TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). It's minor things that happen today — subtle, even. Your interpretation of events will influence your destiny (and mood!) more than the events themselves.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Certain people have proven to be so much trouble for you that you know to avoid them completely. As for the unknown trouble sources — it's just a sense you get, and today an extremely accurate one. Heed your own warning.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You have an excellent rapport with a lot of different kinds of people. But what you have with one person is much more. It's a deep and lasting connection, made possible by your intimate understanding of this person's pain and joy.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You may be in line for a certain product, but it's not the product you're after, not really. You want the experience — the dance of this. You want the story this quest is sure to give you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You wonder if the right sort of partnership could lift your life to a new place. What would the relationship have to be? What would you ask of the other person? There may be a way to embody these things yourself.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The saying goes: "You get out what you put in." That's not entirely true. If you wanted the same thing you put in, you'd just keep it. As for the trades you're currently making, some no longer seem fair or worth it. Change it up.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). If a tourist came into your life right now, that person would see some parts of it as romantic, fascinating and fun and other parts as uncomfortable and in need of a lift. What do you see with your

"tourist" eyes?

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Most people wait for holidays and breaks to spend time with the ones they love, but you don't have to. You can create the moments; steal them. You'll be inspired to make up your own meaningful events.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Believing is a funny thing. You sometimes believe in things you know aren't real because it's more interesting that way, or because everyone is doing it, or because what the belief encompasses is more real than reality.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There are a number of things that are far more contagious than head colds: manners of thought, emotional expressions, luck, attitudes, sayings, skills, abilities, viewpoints. ... You'll be in the mix and picking up plenty.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You want clarity, productivity, high energy and success. Well, you want at least three of those things anyway, and there's one you're not so sure of. If you can convince yourself, the impediments will fall away.

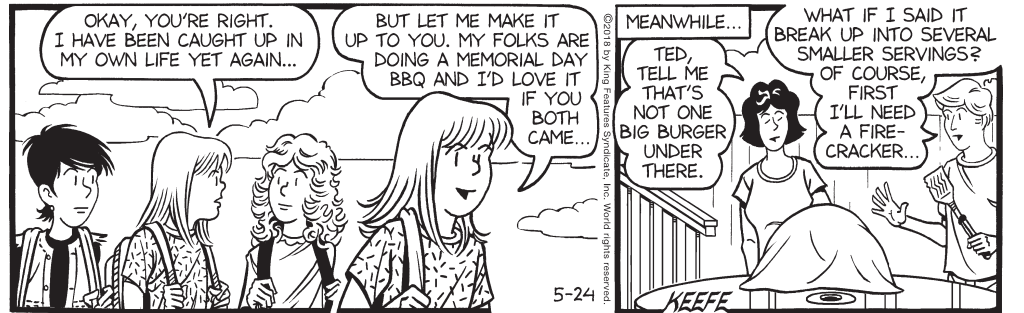
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). For a discipline to make a difference in your life it must be constant in nature. Repetition is the only way a practice can become ingrained as second nature and adopted as character.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (May 25). You are learning to use your emotions (both positive and negative) for what they can give the world. Joy is a contagion. Anger is motivation. What you used to envy others for, you now embody. This new relationship to your feelings will translate into improved relationships and very successful projects. Libra and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 9, 20, 33 and 14.

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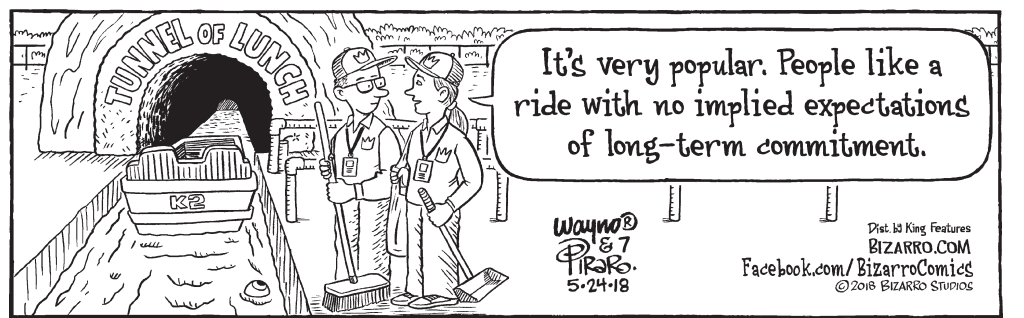
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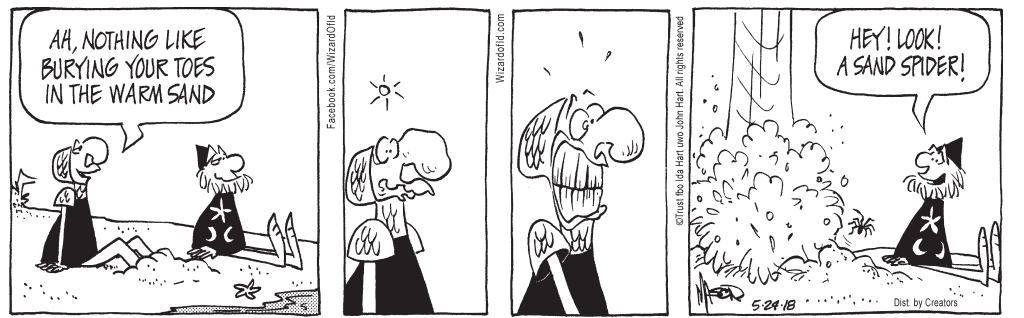
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