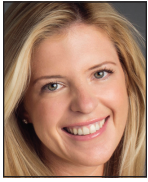


Stressing about getting older

Dear Annie: My 30th birthday is just around the corner, and it's bothering me more than I'd like to admit. I know that right about now, people older than I am are probably reading this and feeling insulted and/or rolling their eyes. I don't mean any offense. I've just never wanted to grow up. Even when I was a kid, birthdays bummed me out. (OK, I liked the presents and cake.)

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

A few months ago, I noticed crow's-feet starting at the corner of one eye. They don't bother me for cosmetic reasons. It's just that seeing wrinkles reminds me I'm getting older and time is passing more and more quickly. And that stresses me out!

Before I enter the mopey sad spiral, do you have any advice on coping with this whole aging thing? — *Twenty-Something*

Dear Twenty-Something: Treat every day like the gift it is and you'll come to view growing older as a blessing. After all, some people don't get the chance to do it.

Make time your ally rather than your enemy. The trick to this is taking up hobbies and pursuing goals you truly care about. That way,

you'll focus not on how much time is passing but on how much progress you're making. I'd also recommend volunteering with a local nonprofit. Being of service to others helps us realize we're part of something timeless and bigger than our individual selves.

Lastly, learn to love those crow's-feet. As the forever-youthful Jimmy Buffett sang, wrinkles only go where smiles have been. Happy birthday. Keep smiling.

Dear Annie: I read a poignant letter in your column from "Ann in Illinois." It was about some abandoned dogs. I wanted to share something that happened to me that sheds some light on how some strays become "abandoned."

In 2011, I was traveling cross-country to a dream job. I packed up my old car with what I'd need to get started again and loaded up my elderly dog and two older cats, and off we went. At one point, when we were within a day's drive of our new life, I stopped to let my dog out to stretch and do her business. But when I opened the door, one of my cats broke out of his kennel (the door wasn't fully latched)

and took off. Long story short, while trying to chase him, I slipped on wet grass and broke my ankle. I was taken away in an ambulance. It was a full week before I was released from the hospital. I checked in to the Super 8 that was close to where I'd lost my cat and used the last of my money to stay another week, hobbling out to the parking lot and calling for him. I was able to reach out to some local animal groups, which sent people to put out some traps in the area and put up posters. But he was never found.

I'm sure that anyone who might have picked him up from that parking area thought someone had dumped him. That was not the case. Sometimes bad things happen and pets get away.

If anyone reading this picked up a beautiful silver tabby with blue eyes and a crumpled ear in May 2011, that was my Mookie. I hope he found safety and love, because he was deeply loved by me. I miss him every day. — *Marcia in Oregon*

Dear Marcia: You're right. One shouldn't assume every stray animal was abandoned. I can tell Mookie still holds a big place in your heart. It sounds as though you were both better for having known each other. Animals bring so much love into this world.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Success is a pretty simple formula for you today. You'll trade your solution to a person who can use it for their problem. The price will be easy to agree upon.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Today, you're trying to hit that high note. Once you find it, move on. When you start to feel great about the situation, ask no further questions. Sail on with that tone, taking action in a positive direction.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). When attraction takes the form of infatuation, the excitement floats up like a helium balloon, distancing itself from the reality of the ground. It's a fun ride, though it's important to know that what goes up always comes down.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Your inventive mind is sparkling with potential today, so put it to good use. Think about the problems that plague people. Don't doubt that you could be the one to create products and services people dearly want.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). When you know you're going to be in something for a long, long time, you'd better make sure it's comfortable. This applies to homes, clothes and relationships. Time can turn the slightest rub into a torture.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Every single person who walks the planet is flawed. Surround yourself with people whose flaws you can tolerate, because to spend your minutes raging against another person's flaws is the definition of futility.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Spread your attention around today, otherwise things get too intense. If you place too much emotion on one person or subject, other things will fall out of balance.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Most people don't like going places where they feel they must always be "on." Comfortable is good. You'll rack up the nice interactions today and this goes a great way toward creating a sense of stability.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The tendency is to fantasize about a future in which things will be and feel different, more fun, more exciting... but actually how you feel today is a gauge of how you might feel tomorrow. So feel great today!

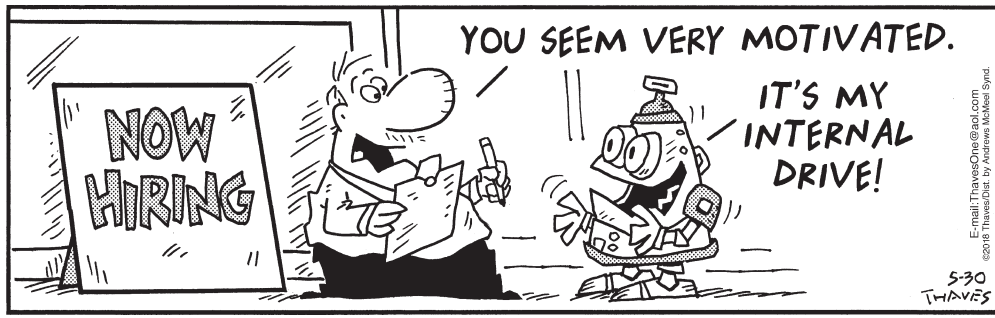
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There's nothing to be done about the parts you can't control. It will go wrong; it will go right. The best you can do is to extract an interpretation that helps you feel joyful.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You've so much to teach others and yet you don't realize it because it's difficult to see what you already know. Being around people who are different from you will give you a more accurate perspective of what you have to offer.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). It's another one of those counterintuitive social rules that will apply to today's interactions: The more you try and impress, the less impressed they are. The answer isn't to be careless; it's to be carefree.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (May 31). In business and in love it will happen the same way. The more self-contained, autonomous and independent you are, the more people will want to be a part of your life and work. Deals will be struck in July. Family will have wonders to celebrate together in 2019. Your education will pay off, and you'll decide to further it, too. Capricorn and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 41, 20, 6, 31 and 9.

FRANK AND ERNEST



BLONDIE



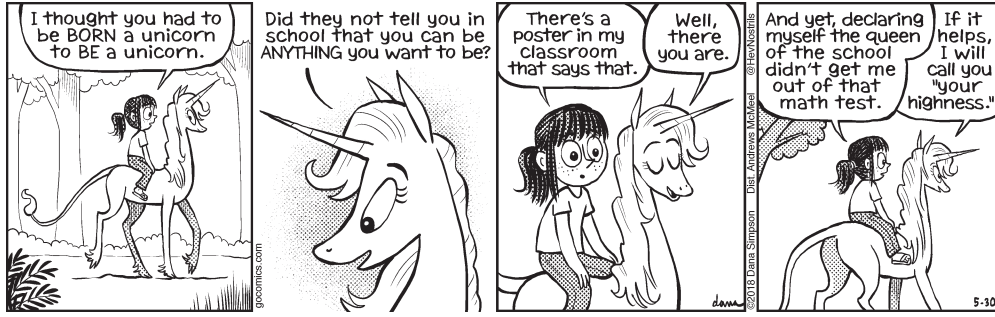
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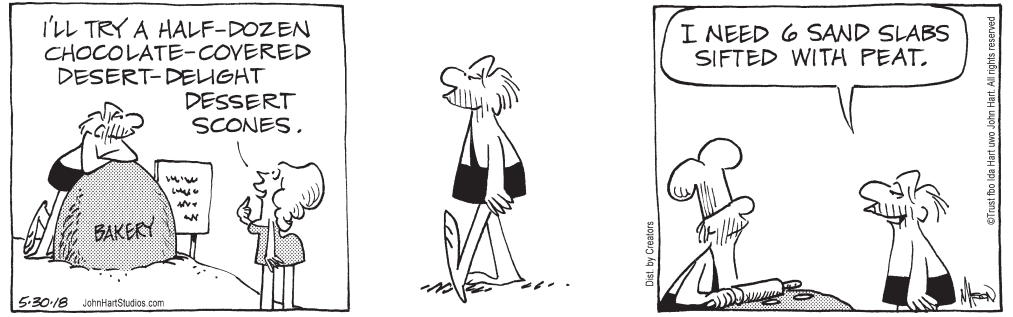
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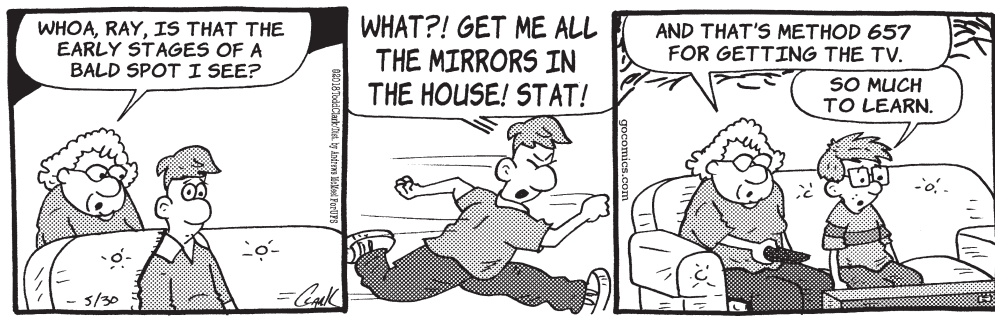
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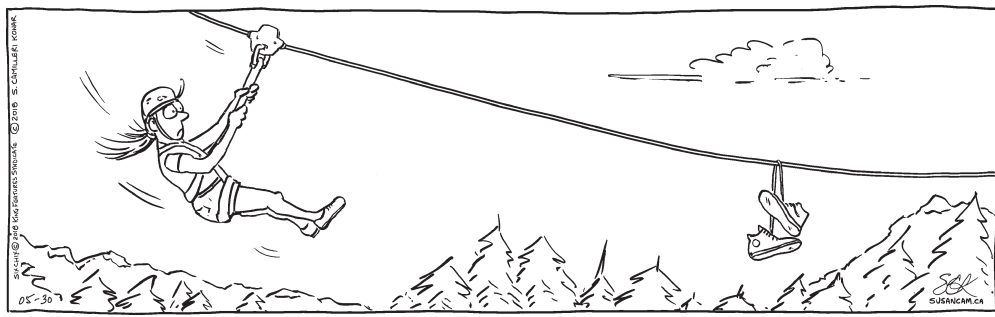
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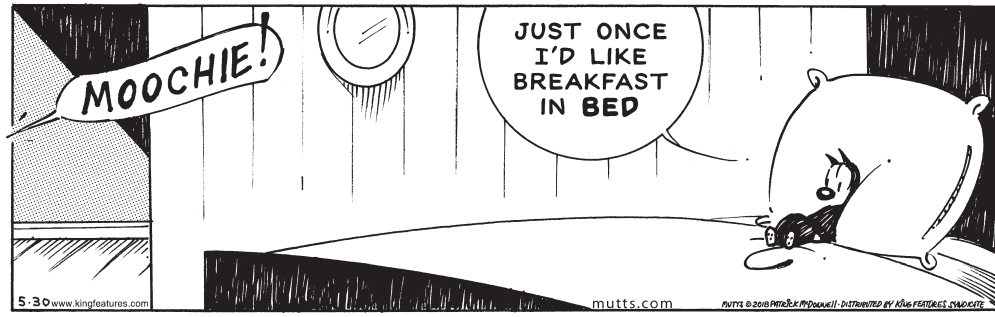
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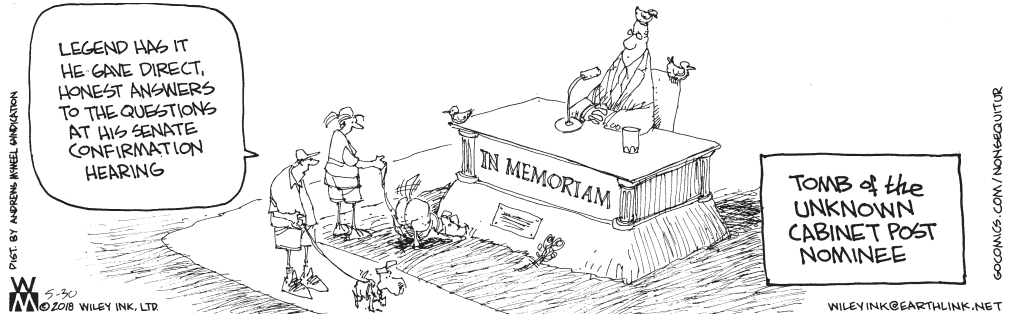
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