

Think hard before marriage

Dear Annie: Wedding season is upon us. I have been married for over 30 years, and I would like to share some wisdom and hard truths with any prospective brides or grooms.

The man or woman you are marrying will not change. Many things are hard-wired by the time we are in our late teens. To avoid a lifetime of regret and disappointment, please pay attention to the warning signs and your gut instincts. When we are young, we begin with hope and enthusiasm. These are good traits, but they can also blind us to reality. Take your time entering into this commitment. When differing attitudes arise on occasion, it's a chance to see what your future would look like with this person.

No amount of love or sacrifice can change a person. Please take my word for it.

If your prospective husband does not believe in calling when he is out late, you will spend many nights lying awake, wondering where he is and worrying. If your prospective wife does not cook or clean and has no interest in doing so, you won't

have many home-cooked meals or a tidy home.

I have spent most of my life trying to adapt to the marriage I am in. This is my fault. I don't blame anyone but myself. I wish the 57-year-old me could talk to the 24-year-old me and tell me how it is. If I could have seen into my future, I might well have been much happier.

Now I find myself absolutely brokenhearted — defeated, ashamed, lonely. My bad. The signs were there. I ignored them. I can't believe I am almost 60 and unhappier than I can ever remember being.

I have resigned myself to this life. There are too many little ones who rely on me for security. To divorce this man would wreck our family. And because he shows a completely different person to the rest of the world, no one would support me. To leave this marriage at this stage is not an option. I have lost the will to even stand my ground.

If you are considering getting married and have a little nagging voice that is trying its best to be heard, listen. Please. I have learned to be my own best friend and get through each day. And that, people,

is no way to live. — *Doing a Life Sentence With No Parole*

Dear Doing a Life Sentence: I wholeheartedly agree with your advice to heed intuition and think carefully before entering a marriage. And you're right that no one should expect marriage to change or "fix" a person. But I have to ask you to please consider not resigning yourself to such unhappiness for the rest of your life. Just think: The 77-year-old you might write another letter, wishing the 57-year-old you had made a change. You still have decades ahead of you. They could be the happiest years of your life.

If you feel trapped in the marriage because of financial dependency, consult a lawyer and look into your options. There may be more there than you think. If your husband is abusing you physically or verbally, call The National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233 for further guidance or just someone to talk to.

Dear Annie: This is in response to your answer to "Sleeping Bare": If I have to evacuate my house because of a fire, being nude will be the least of my problems. — *Naked Ed*

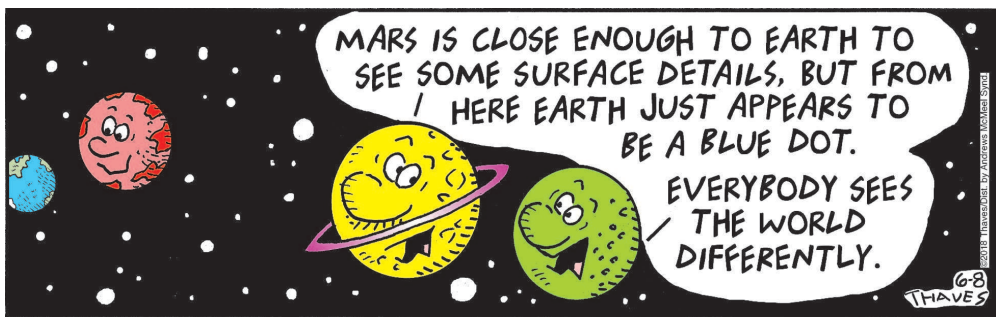
Dear Naked Ed: Your letter made me laugh out loud. Fair point.

DEAR ANNIE

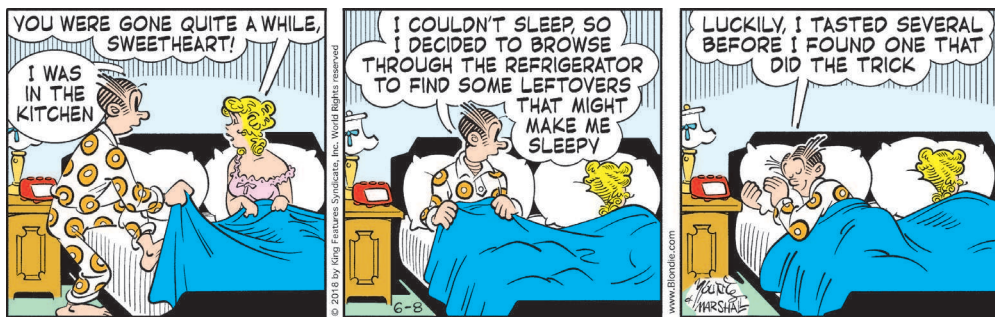


Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

FRANK AND ERNEST



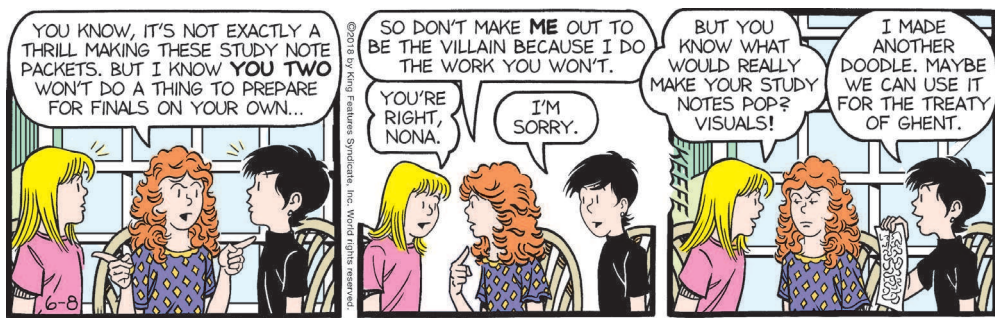
BLONDIE



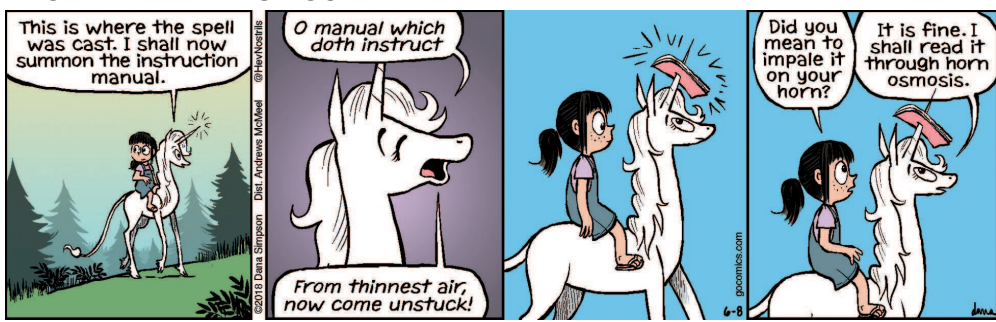
THATABABY



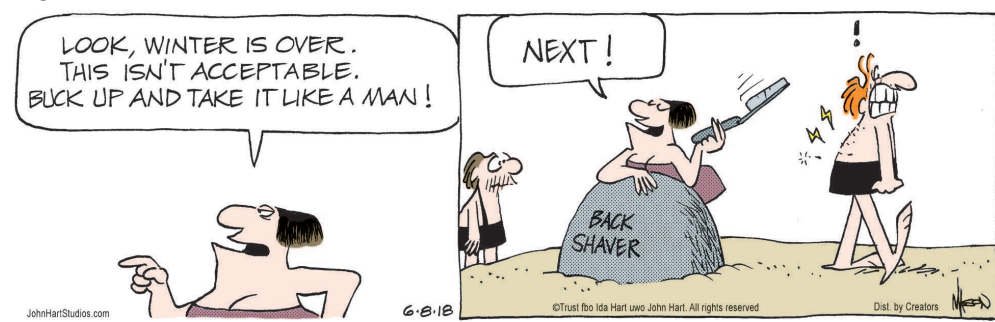
SALLY FORTH



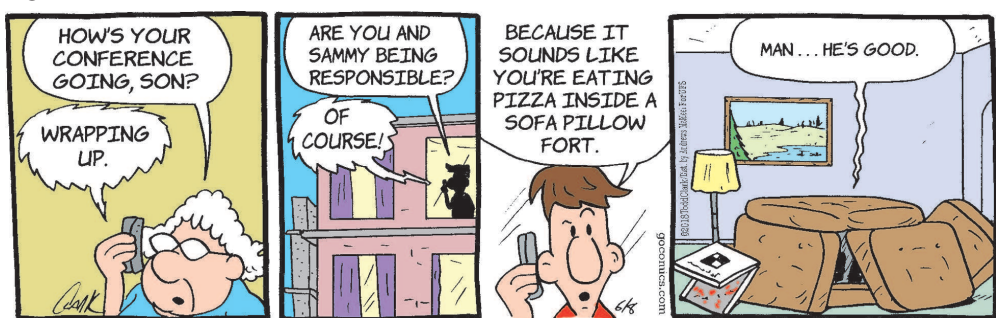
PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



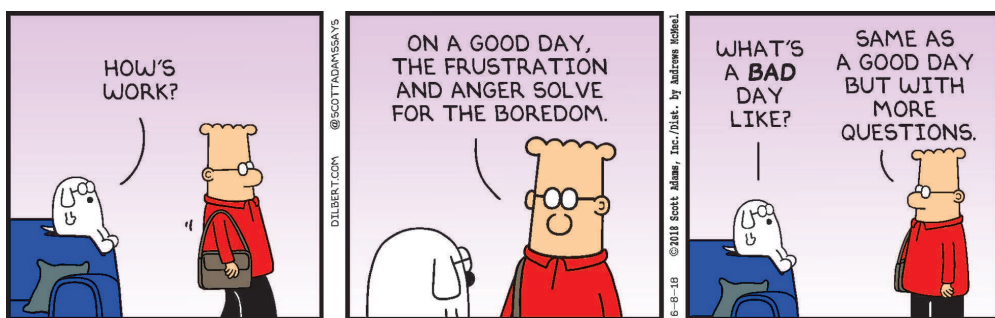
B.C.



LOLA



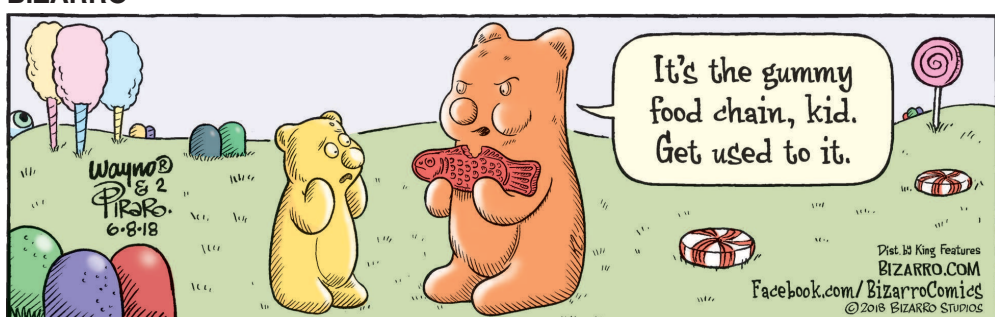
DILBERT



SIX CHIX



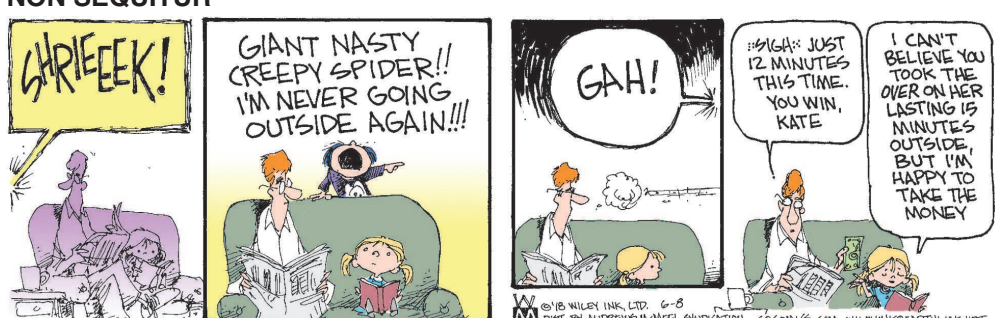
BIZARRO



MUTTS



NON SEQUITUR



BABY BLUES



WIZARD OF ID



ZITS



ROSE IS ROSE

