

Deciding whether to have kids

Dear Annie: How does one know whether she wants children? For my whole life, I haven't been sure, but I figured I'd know eventually. Now I'm in my late 20s and not any closer to making up my mind.

I'm afraid I'd regret it if I didn't have kids, but I've never particularly wanted them, either. Don't get me wrong; I am sure that if I did have them, I would love them more than anything — but that also scares me, because it would mean focusing less on my career. And honestly, when I try to imagine the future, my career is the first thing that comes to mind. I have plans to start my own business within the next five years. My work excites me and fulfills me. I also love my current lifestyle — taking spontaneous trips and trying new hobbies.

I'm not even in a serious relationship right now, so it's not as though I'd be settling down and having children soon. But if it's something I want to do, I feel that I at least need to start moving my life toward that direction. I'm realizing how quickly time passes once you're in the working world, and my 30s will be here before I know it. How does

one know whether she wants to be a mom? — *Undecided in Ohio*

Dear Undecided: You are a very wise and thoughtful woman. Children are a huge responsibility. They rely on you for their very existence. So putting your career ahead of them is not an option. If you are truly undecided about having children right now, I would say wait and see. When that serious relationship comes along, you'll see what your partner wants out of life. If you find a partner who is very nurturing and really wants kids, then he might take on the majority of responsibility so that you can continue to focus on your career. If you find a partner who feels the way you do, then the two of you might find a very fulfilling life in other ways, with extended family, friends, career, travel or volunteering.

There is no right or wrong answer. What is not right for you now may be right for you in five years. And if it's not right in five years, then you will find other enjoyments. The point is that you don't have to have it all mapped out perfectly. Some of the most interesting people took their time in figuring

out exactly what they wanted from life. Regardless of whether you have children, it sounds as if you will have a very fulfilling life because of your thoughtfulness in the pursuit of happiness.

Dear Annie: I was mistreated at my husband's funeral. People walked by as if I didn't exist. I was mistreated by his son, my stepson. I loved my husband very much, and I won't get married again. I had a good man, and nobody could take his place. How does one deal with life when she has lost her husband? — *Angel in Illinois*

Dear Angel: I am so sorry for your loss. And I am sorry you're feeling so alone in your time of grief. There's no easy answer, but reaching out to others — as you have done in writing to me — can help, even if you don't quite feel like it. Look to friends, grief counselors and spiritual advisers for support, as well as organizations such as Soaring Spirits International. Its website says, "Widowed people created Soaring Spirits because we discovered that connecting with other widowed people made the challenges of surviving a spouse or partner a little easier to manage." Visit <https://www.soaringspirits.org> or call 877-671-4071 for more information.

DEAR ANNIE



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TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). In order to celebrate what is, you'll have to let go of what you thought it would be. This shouldn't be too hard, since there's much about the way things are right now that suits you better than you'd ever dreamed.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Sometimes inspiration strikes. Other times, including now, it's more of an itch, a slow tug or a nudge that gets you on the path. Once there, life starts to feel like a custom design made just for you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Yes, there were deals that didn't quite pan out, arrangements that never found their groove and actions that didn't land as you might have preferred. But if it made you smile, there's nothing to regret about it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Unfamiliar people will be especially hard to read, and it may be best not to try. Assume nothing. Ask questions instead. It would be easy to over-dramatize the significance of social interactions today, but try not to.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The most important thing in life is this. Literally this. Because "this" is what you're doing now — or, more precisely, 12 words ago. The present moment is your domain. Seize it over and over.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The first hint was when they said, "Repeat after me: I am free." Well then, why don't you feel like it? All of this "acting normal" might have something to do with it. What was that idea you had that came from you and only you?

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Anyone who's loved a television character or been devastated by the plot line of a book knows that something doesn't actually need to happen to feel real.

You can use this principle to your advantage.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The young who set out to learn who they are tend to miss the point. Those who have become who they are tend to be so completely unselfconscious, they no longer think about such things, if they ever did.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Today's road isn't exactly smooth, but this only makes you more appreciative of the paved paths of your past and future. Keep a sure footing and move ever forward. You can't stumble over something if it's behind you.

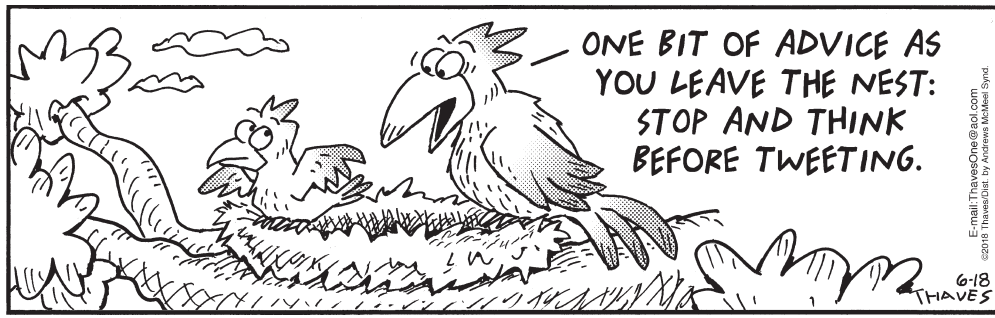
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your attention is a precious commodity that's all yours to distribute how you see fit. Sometimes you give unconditionally, but today you let people earn your attention. You're both better for the effort.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The beauty is all around you today, mostly because you have the eye to pick it out. You're also excellent at bringing together the elements that will feature beauty in its best frame and light.

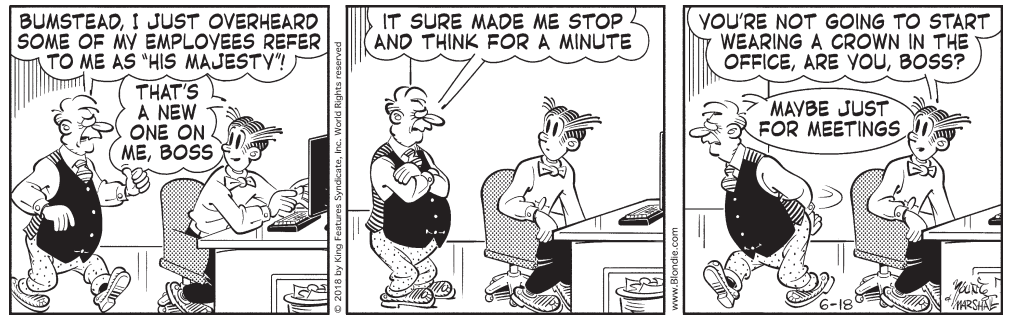
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You've been in the equivalent of a chorus line — where blending in, kicking the same height as the others and generally working as one were the necessary qualities for success. Today it's time to step out with your solo work.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (June 19). There will be three months of closing karmic circles. Past kindnesses will catch up to you, and you'll also enjoy the delayed benefits of work you did long ago. You'll be generally embraced and applauded in 2019 to the extent that you might often choose a low profile just to take a break from the spotlight. Leo and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 20, 13, 35 and 28.

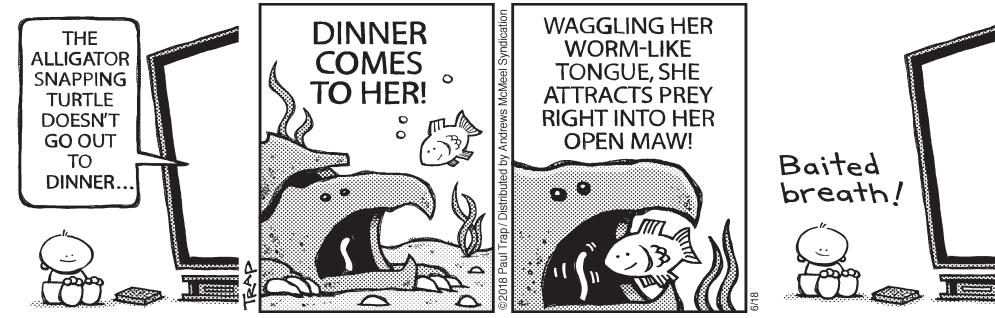
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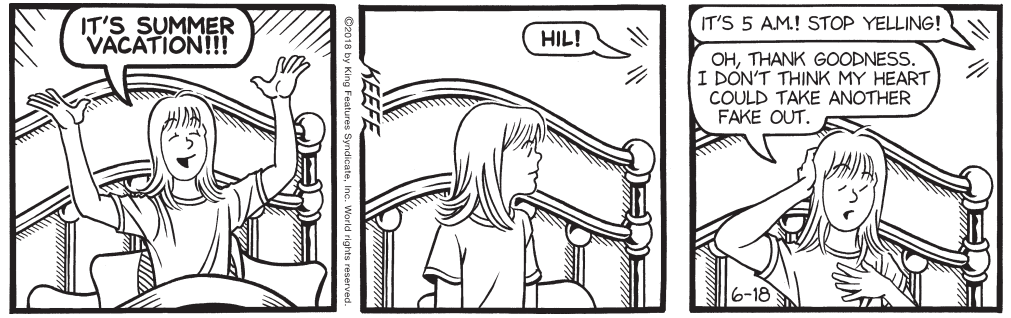
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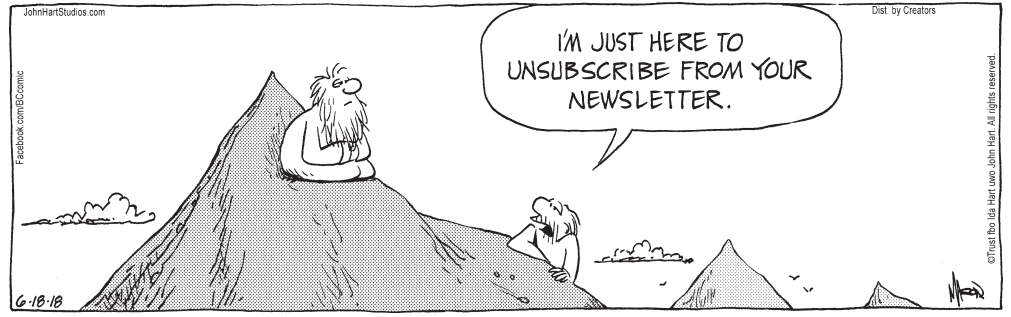
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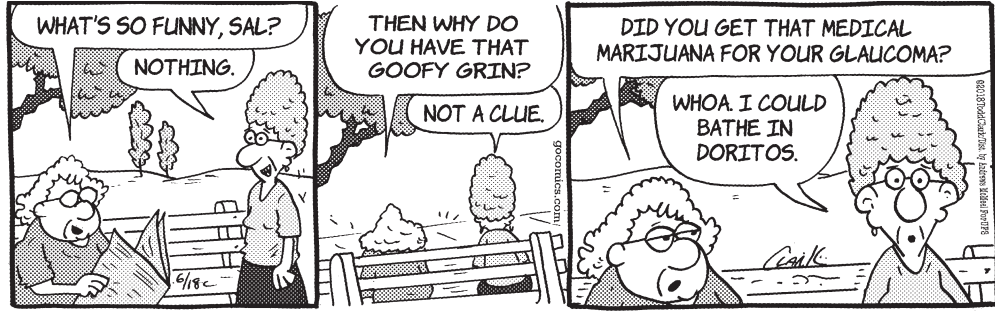
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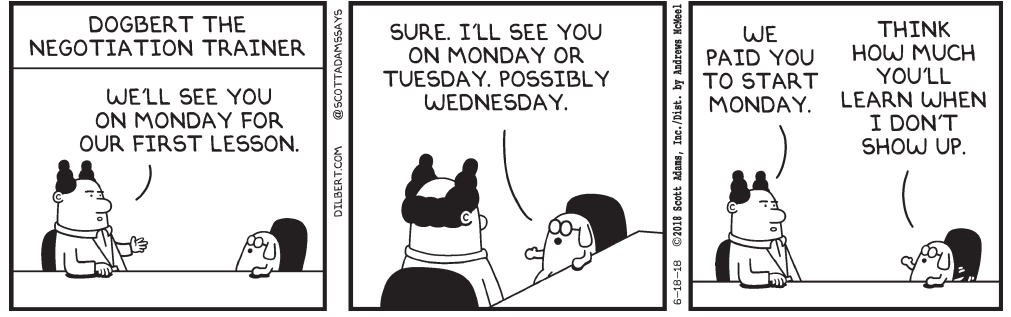
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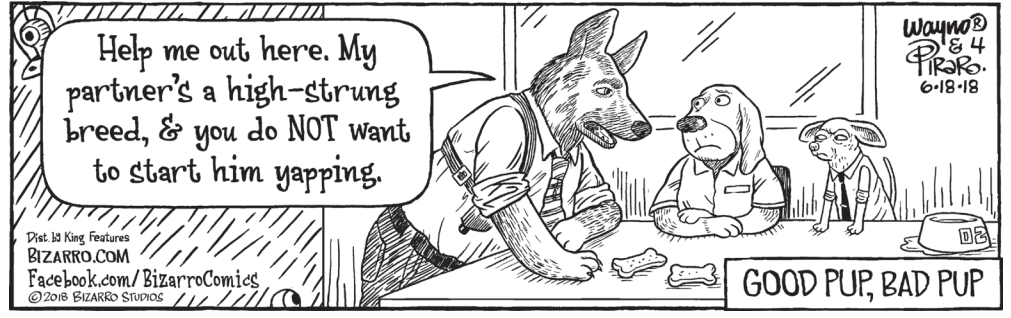
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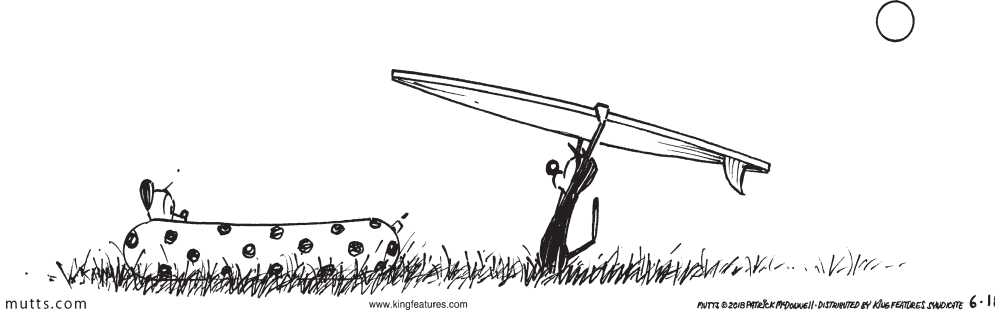
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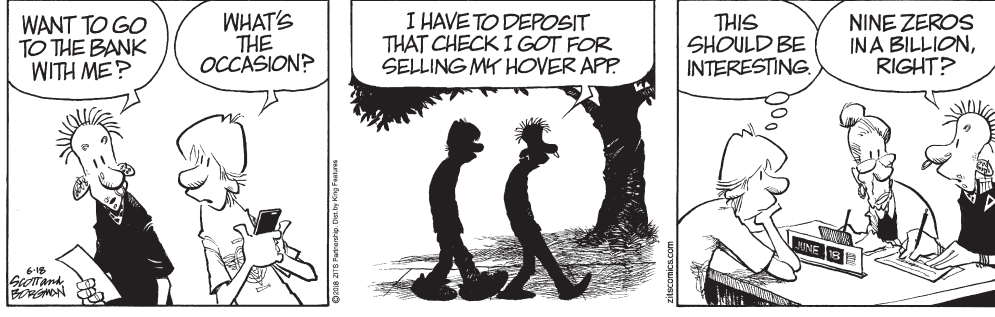
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