

Feeling shame over relationship

Dear Annie: I am seeking your advice about something that has been troubling me. My faith has always been very important to me. I have strong moral values, and I don't believe in having a sexual relationship outside of marriage. So I am deeply ashamed about a relationship I had with a man to whom I am not married. This man had some problems that made intimacy difficult, which was a blessing in itself. The relationship didn't last long, and it mostly just consisted of telephone conversations. Still, the fact that I allowed myself to enter into a relationship of this type haunts me. I have prayed repeatedly about this, but I am having difficulty forgiving myself.

DEAR ANNIE



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answer his calls. I finally sent him a text, told him I was well and wished him well. He asked why I did not want to talk to him. I told him that I was very busy and that when he called, I was not always where I could talk, which was true. How can I put this behind me? I haven't seen this man since I quit talking to him. I've become so depressed about this that I have just stayed in except to do necessary things. I've experienced panic attacks. I have spent most of my time involved in church activities and doing volunteer work. I don't think I have agoraphobia; rather, I'm so ashamed that I have retreated. I love people and doing for others. I am on an antidepressant, and I do have something to take for panic attacks. — *I Knew Better*

What can I do to be at peace about this? I cannot talk to my minister about this. I do not have contact with this man. He would call quite often to check on me. I reached the decision that I should not have telephone conversations with him. A few weeks ago, he called every day for about a week, and I did not

Dear Knew Better: I applaud you for seeking professional help, and I encourage you to keep taking medication as directed by your doctor. But medication is only one part of the equation. You should also

be seeing a licensed therapist, someone who can help you talk about what you're feeling and help you move past the shame. Ask your doctor to refer you to someone, or search Psychology Today's database at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>. Be prepared to try a few different therapists to find one with whom you really click.

And please stop being so hard on yourself. You seem like a warmhearted person who values kindness. Try to show yourself the same compassion you would show anyone else.

Dear Annie: Why are we saying 2018 as "two thousand eighteen" instead of "twenty eighteen"? We didn't say "one thousand nine hundred eighteen." And it's much easier to say "twenty eighteen." This bugs me and my adult son. Care to comment? — *Curious*

Dear Curious: This is one question for which I have no answer. If I hear a compelling explanation, I'll print it here. In the meantime, I see no reason you can't be the change you want to see. Pronounce it how you'd like, and others may follow suit.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Your intuition is spot on today — not because you can see the future but because you can make the future. You've a sense about what's possible and how much work it will take. You do it until it's done.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). A weak teacher will tell you that the reason you didn't succeed in the class is that you didn't work hard enough. A strong teacher makes you want to work hard; a strong teacher considers your success a joint mission.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). In order to fit into the group agenda, you might have to compromise on your approach, plan or product, but you shouldn't have to compromise who you are.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll be invigorated by people working together to accomplish a common goal, especially if the goal has something to do with improving themselves or improving the world through kindness.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Ask yourself the questions that will help you get clear about what you want to accomplish. Then the "how" won't matter so much. As you focus on the effect that you want to have, the details work themselves out.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There's a pleasant (not outrageous or startling) surprise in this day just for you, a little something to make your ride smoother and your smile wider.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). To get more problems, obsess about all the problems you already have. To get fewer problems, focus on just one problem and solve it. Then move to the next.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Even though you know better than to get "attached to an outcome," for better or worse, you're invested in what happens next. It just happens that way when you love something this much.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Life doesn't always fall into a lovely pattern; sometimes it has to be forced or puzzled together into one. Actually, the forcing usually only works for a short term. Better to toy around and find something that fits.

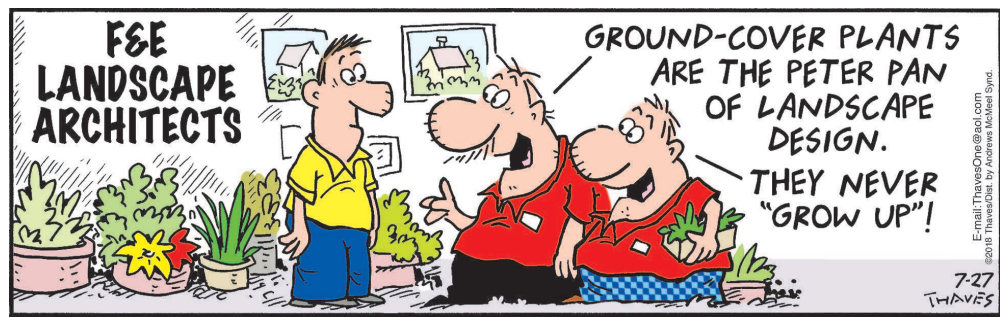
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Every time you introduce a new variable, things change. One person alters the whole group, and indeed every person is the "one" person who does this. So don't discount your contribution, even in very large gatherings.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). This is an excellent time to look at your expenses and cut the subscriptions and recurring payments that go to things you don't really use. It will bring your finances and more back into balance without a sense of sacrifice.

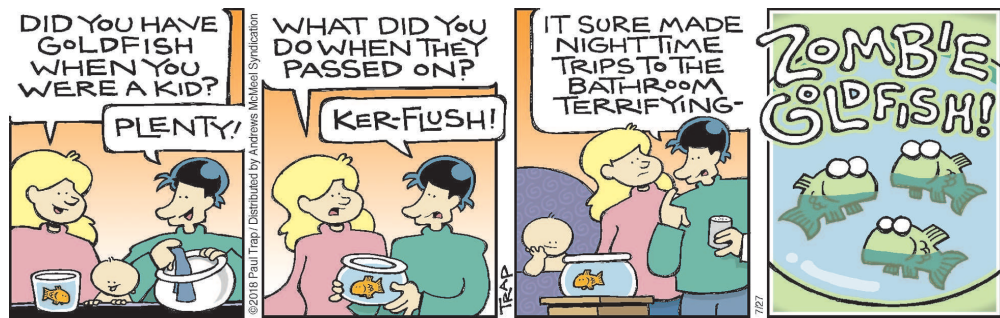
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Even though your reflexes are superior, you'd rather live proactively so that you're not in a reactive position. Tonight brings a hint that will help with the mystery you've been trying to solve.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (July 28). You keep creating and making things happen, and that's why this year brings four major celebrations of you. October brings special courage, and you'll dive into a daring aim — something you wouldn't have had the guts or skills for in the past. You'll be ready! This will begin a trajectory you'll follow through to your next birthday. Pisces and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 30, 29, 44 and 12.

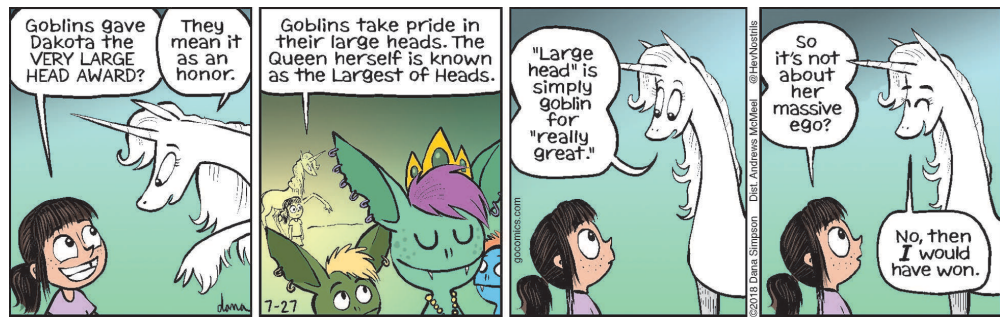
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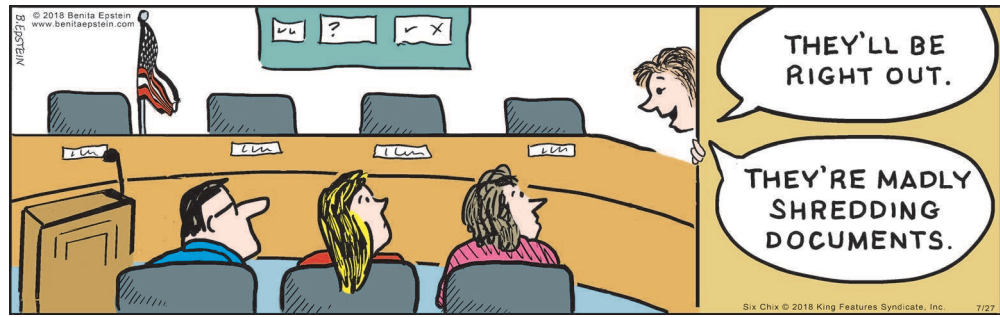
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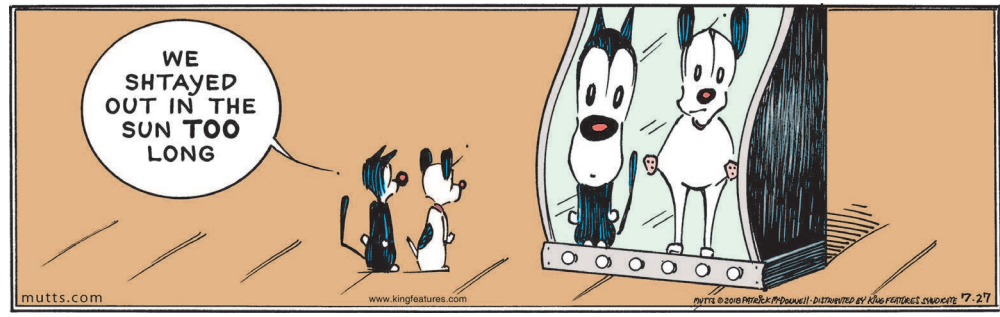
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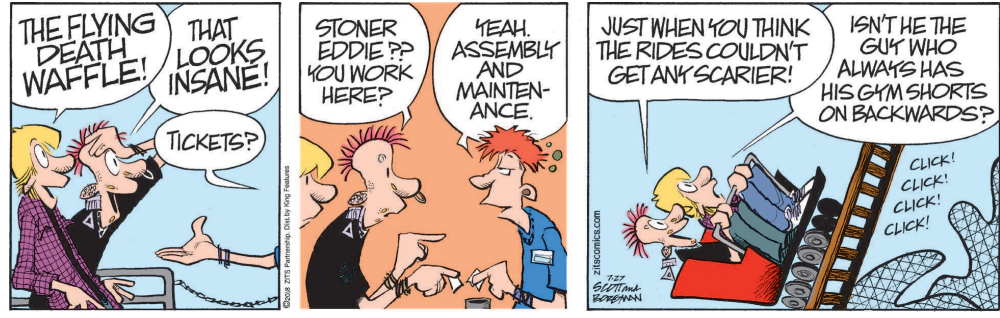
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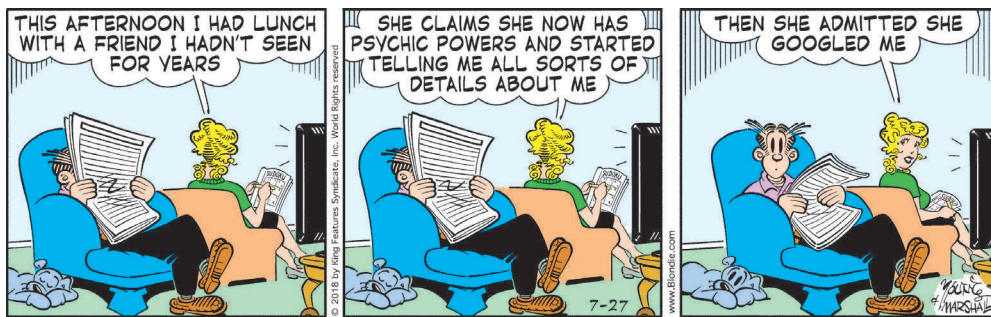
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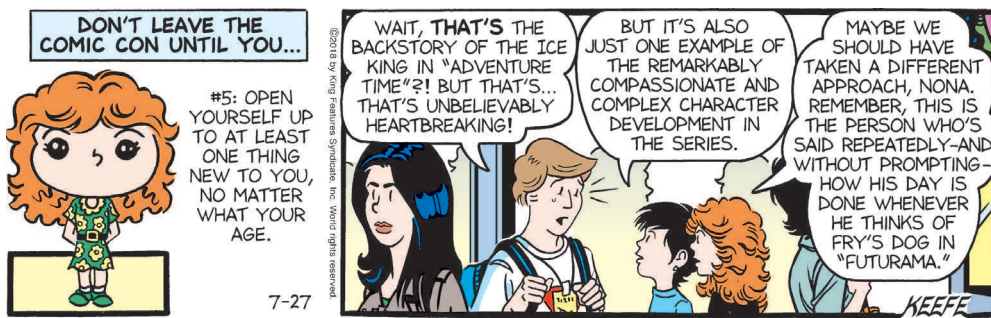
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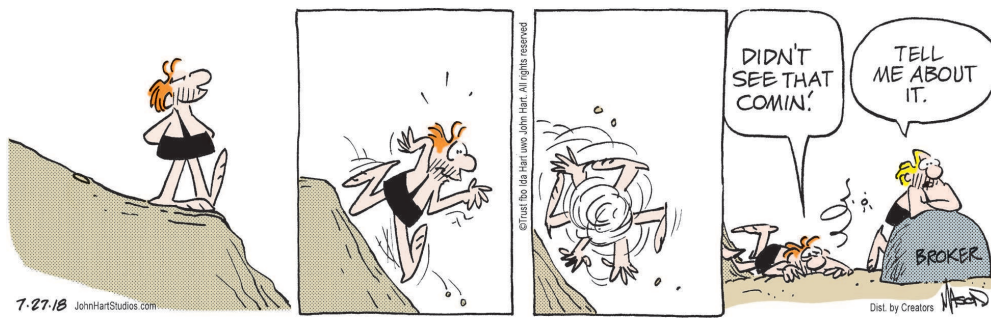
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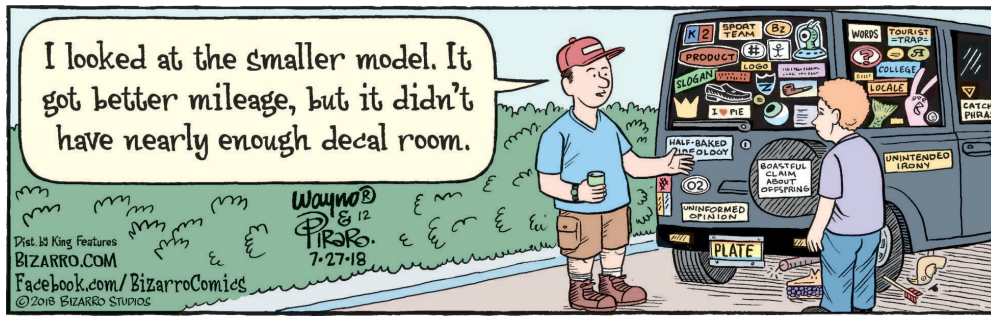
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