

Regretting having children

Dear Readers: Last month, I posed a question to everyone: “If you had to do it all over again, would you have kids?” Thousands of you responded.

Two days ago, we heard from parents who would gladly have children if given a redo. (They constituted 77 percent of responses overall.) Yesterday’s column was dedicated to people who don’t regret not having children (the second-most common group, at 12 percent). Today we’ll hear from the third-most populous group (9 percent): parents who, if given the chance to start over, would opt not to have children. I appreciate the vulnerability and honesty of these respondents, as it is obviously a difficult subject and calls up some raw emotions.

Read on, and check back tomorrow to hear from the final group: people who regret not having children.

No Name, Please: Never! All they do is grow up and hurt you. Take it from a mother whose grown son wants no contact.

In The South: Yes, but not the same ones.

Kentucky: I am 69 years old, and

I wish I had never had kids. I could write quite a dissertation about what a pain in the rear my son and daughter have been over the years, but I won’t bore you with that. Let’s just say they have screwed up my retirement years, and for that, I am bitter. I

would just like some peace so my wife and I could enjoy what years we have left. The only thing worse than being alone is wishing you were alone.

Hurting: I had two children. One died. My daughter, now an adult, has been a heartache over and over. I wish I’d never had a child. I have a niece and a nephew, and I make a great aunt. They love me with all of their hearts. I wish I had stuck to that.

Louisiana: Thirty years ago, I was promiscuous and struggling with addiction. My plans did not include children. At age 25, I became ill with what I thought was the flu. After seeing a doctor, I was told I was approaching my fourth month of pregnancy. Talk about a game changer! I had to make a decision, because it was no longer about me. If it hadn’t been for that unexpected pregnancy, I would have eventually died of a drug overdose

somewhere down the line. My son was born healthy, and I raised him the best way I knew how. I thank God for my son, my only child. He is the best thing I have ever done with my life, and I thank him for saving mine. But he is now 29 years old and facing some of the same demons I struggled with. So, if I could have prevented his suffering, if I had to do it all over again, I wouldn’t. But no regrets.

On Second Thought: Though I love my present two children, after much thinking, I would prefer not to have had any.

Disappointed: I most definitely would not have children again. I had two children, who are now middle-aged. My son has suffered from mental illness, and life with him has been a roller coaster. He is still pretty much a child, and I have to handle all his affairs. My daughter and grandson moved to the other side of the country, and I haven’t seen them for a few years. Neither of them seems too interested in my welfare, listens to suggestions or takes my advice. I have always tried to be supportive but have let them fail up to a point, to avoid enabling their dysfunction.

BROKENHEARTED: I feel like a bad person for even thinking this, but I would say no.

DEAR ANNIE



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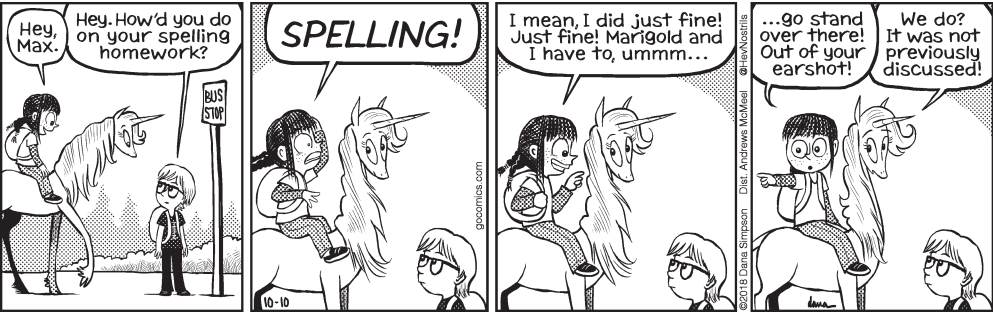
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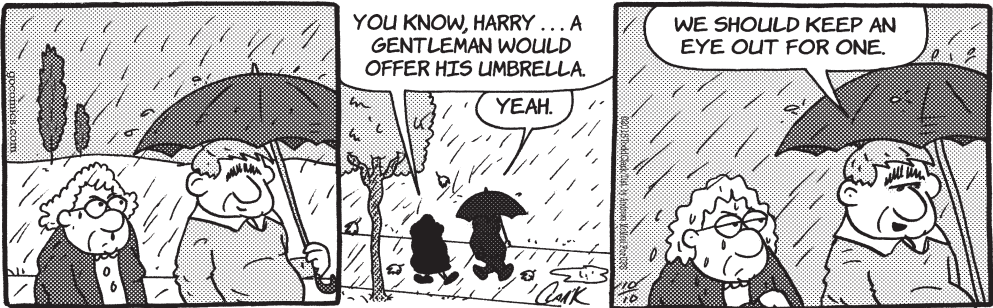
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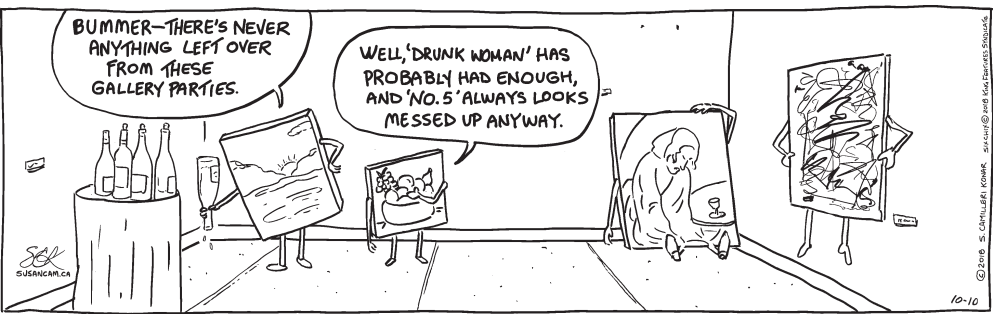
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LOLA



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TOMORROW’S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You might be surprised at what makes you super happy. That’s why it’s so important to try new things. Today, it’s lucky to do this with someone you trust. Tackling fresh experiences together will create a tight bond.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Self-absorption is a state of fear. The trepidation may be mild in variety, a low current of worry that the world is not safe for us. Therefore it’s best to tend to what is known. The self-absorbed will need your compassion today.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Do you walk around this fair thinking, “I’ve already ridden all the rides I want to?” You’re missing something. Either you ruled it out as too scary or too mild when, in fact, there’s a thrill inside that’s just your size.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). This is the cosmic opportunity of the day: If you did it once, you can do it again. And if you haven’t done it, you’re due. Believe it, and make your move.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The highest form of flattery is imitation. Remember that time you followed someone just to make that person feel good about his or her choice? It was big-hearted, but you won’t need to go that far today to make people feel good.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Don’t worry; you will be something better than you were before. And this mistake? It’s not a setback. It’s actually the mechanism through which improvement is made possible.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). To forward your personal journey, you’ll have to ditch a lot of the bad, or rather, the less-than-optimum. And now you’ll get even stricter with yourself, only because you want certain results that take

sacrifice. You’re ready.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your role requires you to live in your head more than you’d like to, reviewing possibilities, playing out different scenarios, testing things mentally. Take frequent breaks to stay fresh. This one is important.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). No one can do what you do. Stop being so hard on yourself. You’re losing perspective on how special you are. To give yourself credit isn’t narcissistic; in fact, it’s the spiritual generosity that helps you be more kind today.

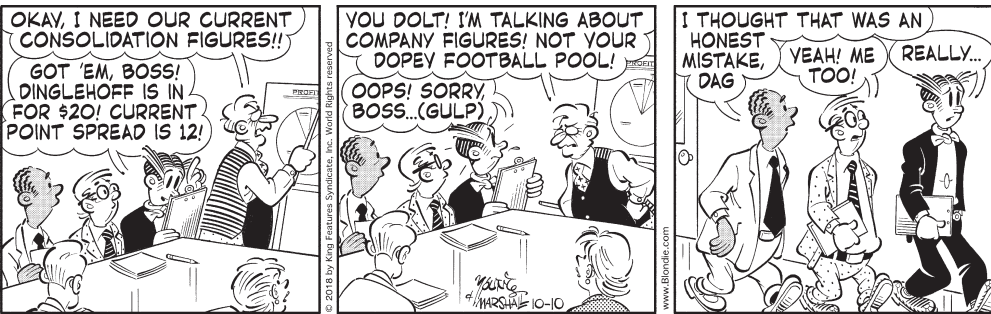
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). To understand others takes emotional wit, social cleverness and a better than average awareness. To understand yourself takes these things plus courage and acceptance.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Do you ever wonder what sort of peace you’d experience through a day without talking? Maybe you can’t go the whole day, but things will change with even a few quiet hours. Silence is a teacher.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). For primates, the standard is to reject or, more likely, attack anyone outside of the group. For humans, inclusion is often the very reason the group thrives. There’s much to absorb from those who are different from us.

TOMORROW’S BIRTHDAY (Oct. 11). If your life were a town, this year would represent a population boom. You’ll have more than the usual amount of company, especially while adventuring. Other highlights include: prime tickets to an event, lots of inside jokes that add richness to your group’s story and a new skill to add to your bag. Taurus and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 14, 6, 22, 12 and 40.

BLONDIE



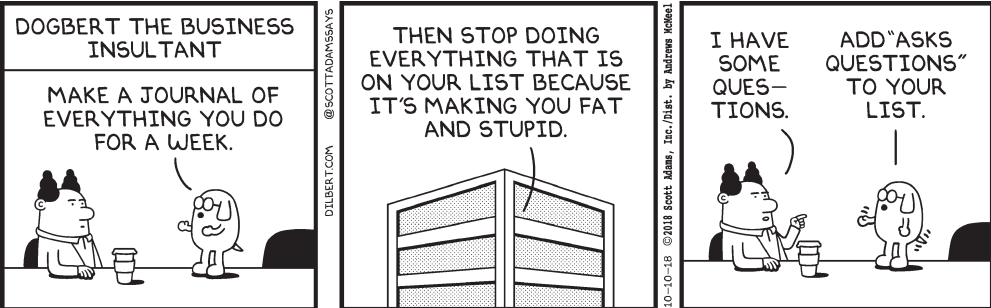
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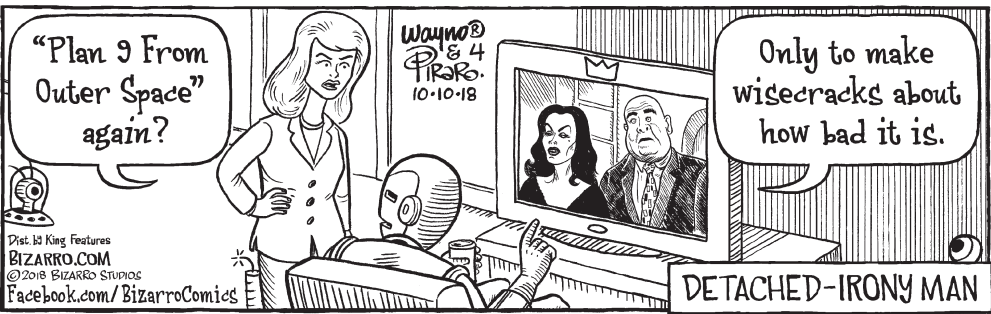
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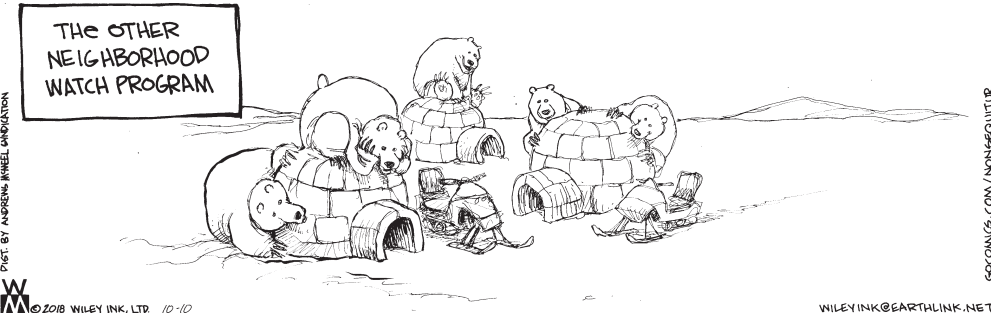
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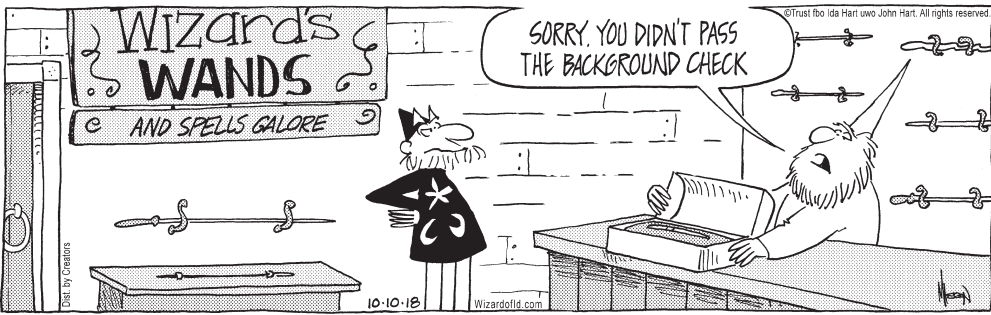
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