

# Reach out and annoy someone

**Dear Annie:** I own a small service business. We have a business phone number, but I also have a cellphone number. The latter is on my business card, and it is obviously the way people prefer to communicate. My problem is that customers don't hesitate to call me or text me at any hour of the morning or evening and virtually any time over the weekend, as well. It has really gotten out of hand as of late. I find it to be intrusive. I realize they're just getting something off their list, but they should either hold off or do it via email, in my humble opinion. My problem is how to address this with them without rubbing them the wrong way. — *Professional Etiquette Paradox*

## DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

**Dear Professional Etiquette:** In recent years, cellphones have started crossing the wires between professional and personal life. I think that's a shame. Fortunately, this technological problem also has some technological solutions. Consider using a call and text management app, such as Nextiva, GoDaddy SmartLine or Google Voice. Google

Voice gives you a separate phone number that connects to multiple lines and allows you to determine where messages and calls go at different times of the day. For instance, you could set it to route any calls after 6 p.m. to the office answering machine. It can also keep all your work-related text messages contained within the Google Voice app so they're not mixed in with your personal messages. This would require printing up new business cards and informing all your current customers that your number has changed. (Though you'd actually still be using your personal cell number, they don't need to know that.) A small cost and a little hassle for big relief in the long run.

**Dear Annie:** I read your column every day and want to point out a phrase that appeared in a recent letter to you that grates my nerves every time I hear or read it. The writer (apparently a man) wrote, "Five years later, my girlfriend got pregnant." The structure of that sentence makes it sound as if the girl-

friend were mysteriously impregnated. The sentence implies the writer doesn't think he had anything to do with this situation — as if his girlfriend just found herself in this situation or caught a disease of some sort. People must be held accountable for their actions, and it starts with our words. It would have been far better if the man had written, "Five years later, I impregnated my girlfriend" or "Five years later, my girlfriend and I were expecting our first baby." Or, if he wasn't the person who participated in the commencement of the pregnancy, then he should have stated it as such. I feel sorry for this woman and their children because he is clearly someone who lacks the "personal responsibility" gene, as his many woes (debt, unsatisfying job, lack of skills) seem to stem from that weird moment when his "girlfriend got pregnant." Thanks for letting me vent. — *It Takes Two to Make Three*

**Dear It Takes Two:** Your letter made me chuckle. Good point. I wouldn't be too hard on this one particular person, as that phrasing is prevalent — though you make a good case for why it shouldn't be.

## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** The group will throw out plenty of ideas, yours being the best. Now you'll have to convince the others, keeping in mind that it's not the best idea that wins, it's the most popular one. Strategize. It will be worth it.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** Things still have to change, but some days you get tired of thinking of all the ways they must. It's OK to give yourself a break, to relax and enjoy the transition that's already underway.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** It is difficult, if not impossible, for people to give what they themselves have never received. Consider this when you seek out your next source of love, understanding, wisdom, knowledge and more.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** Right now you're curious and open, putting feelers into the world. When you clearly see and deeply feel that a cause is worth fighting for, you'll go all in and find no greater happiness in life than this purposeful sacrifice.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Adaptability is one of your many gifts. You can quickly get used to even the most astonishing things when you want to or have to. And yet you're still discerning and cannot be convinced if you're not feeling it.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** You want to let people know you support them and that you care enough to check in and make sure they're all right. The trick is to do this without crossing any sort of boundary that might classify you as a busybody.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** It would be much easier just to handle problems for your people. But then you'll have to do that every time, and when you're not around they'll suffer. So the kind thing is to train them to be

self-sufficient.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Some think being busy is a status symbol. It makes them feel important. Others see leisure as a status symbol. It means they can afford it. The pacing of your day will feel so perfect as to render status rankings moot.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Unexpressed wishes and desires can be like submarines: invisible below the waves though still carrying the potential to torpedo your mood. Bring your aspirations to the surface where they will no longer be a threat.

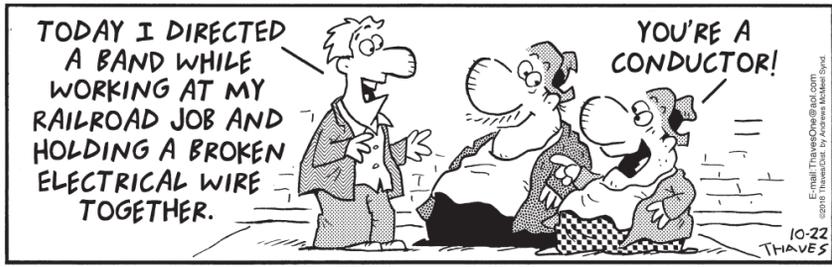
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** If someone is trying to bring you down, it's because that person perceives you as being high above him or her. You might take it as a compliment. Even so, step out of range.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** If you wait for inspiration, you'll miss out on all the delicious creativity that starts to trickle in once you get working. And inspiration is only one of the many things not worth waiting for today. Get moving and see what happens.

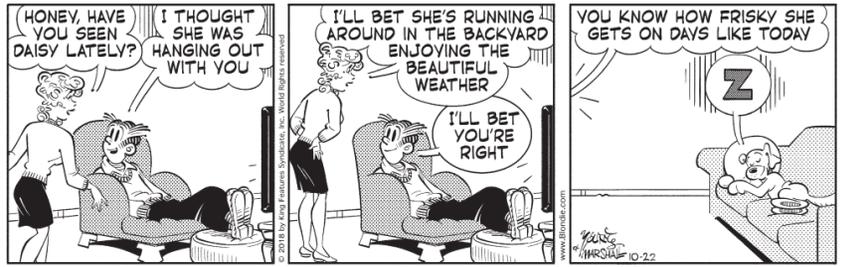
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Your growing power will impact those around you, though they'll try to hide it. It's wise to be humble and quiet about your success, if not out of modesty, then out of strategy.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Oct. 23).** You're in charge and you'll feel it, enjoying the power of being able to steer your life where you want it to go. Highlights of this solar return include teaching a group and changing lives, conducting and receiving the warmth of community and a win for your family that makes life easier for those you love the most. Leo and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 50, 38, 22 and 45.

## FRANK AND ERNEST



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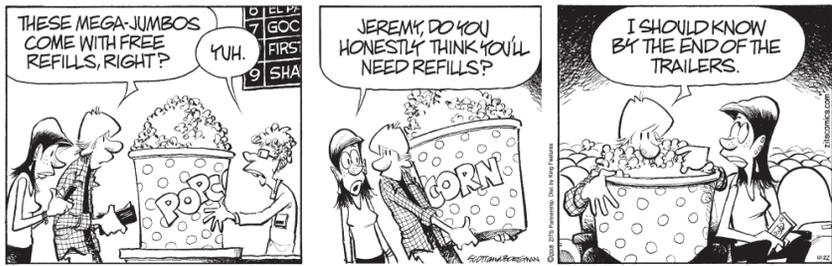
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