

Unemployed and sluggish

Dear Annie: I have read columns like yours since I was a child in the 1980s and always figured, "Yeah, I have problems, but I can handle them." I guess not.

I am in my mid-40s and have two kids and a husband who keeps a roof over my head. I am unemployed, recently losing my job with family because the business closed. I have a head injury from being hit by a car when I was 16, and since losing the family job, I have been finding it difficult to find another, not able enough for work outside of a family business yet not disabled enough for government help. I have been rejected two times.

That's the back story. My problem is that though I have been taking my antidepressants (so that's not it), I cannot seem to get motivated to do anything anymore. I go to have coffee with my friends each weekday. And then I come home and don't want to do anything. My husband says, "Why didn't you (what-ever); you were home all day."

I don't know why. Am I just lazy? — *Sitting Around*

Dear **Sitting Around**: First off, taking antidepressants doesn't mean depression is no longer a problem for you. Let your doctor know what you're experiencing to see whether he or she needs to adjust your treatment. Also, medication is most effective when supplemented with therapy, so consider asking your doctor to refer you to a therapist.

Know that what you're going through is perfectly normal. No matter the reasons for a job loss, adjusting to unemployment is rarely easy, especially for someone who has been working for years. It's natural to feel a combination of restlessness and sluggishness. You are not lazy; you are bored and could possibly use some more structure to your days.

So look for other sources of stimulation and routine, such as social clubs, hobby-oriented groups and volunteer

opportunities. Don't be afraid to try activities that are a little outside your comfort zone. That's where great things happen. Most importantly, stay in touch with yourself, your family and your doctors about how you're feeling. In time, you'll get back your get-up-and-go.

Dear **Annie**: In reference to the writer asking about whether to tip on the gross amount or to tip on the pretax amount, I agree that one should not feel obligated to tip on the gross amount. Many places of business now have precalculated tip options — e.g., 15, 18 and 20 percent — at the touch of a button. This is always figured on the gross check (after tax has been applied). If you wish to tip 20 percent but only want it figured on the pretax amount, choose 18 percent. Because most sales tax rates are about 9 percent, you will find that this comes out to within pennies of the pretax 20 percent figure. — *Kansas Accountant*

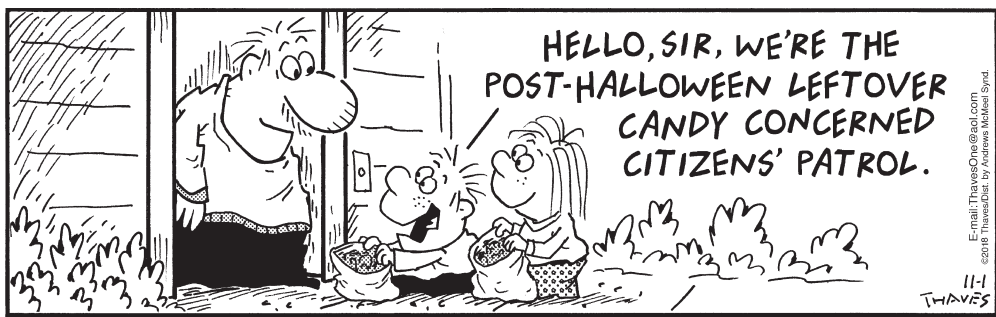
Dear **Kansas Accountant**: Thank you for the expert tip! Always happy to learn more helpful little tricks such as this.

DEAR ANNIE

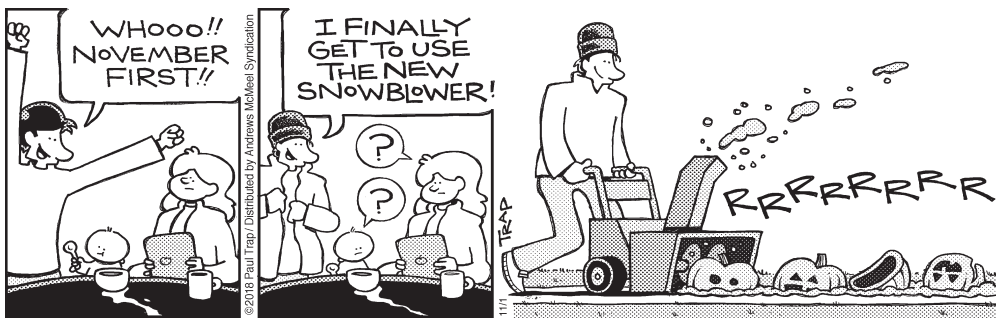


Annie Lane
Creators
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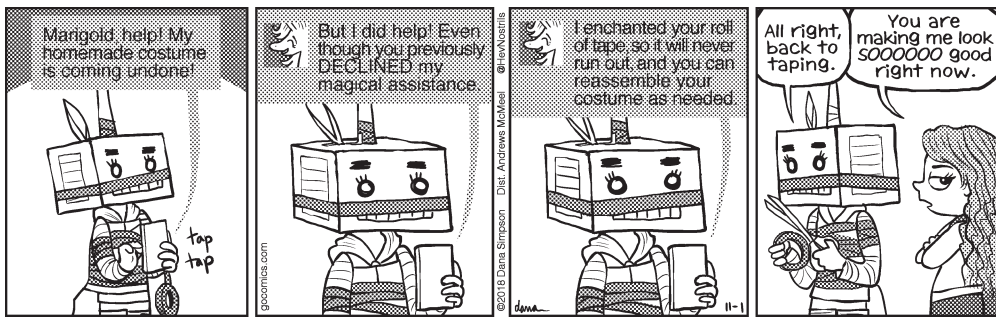
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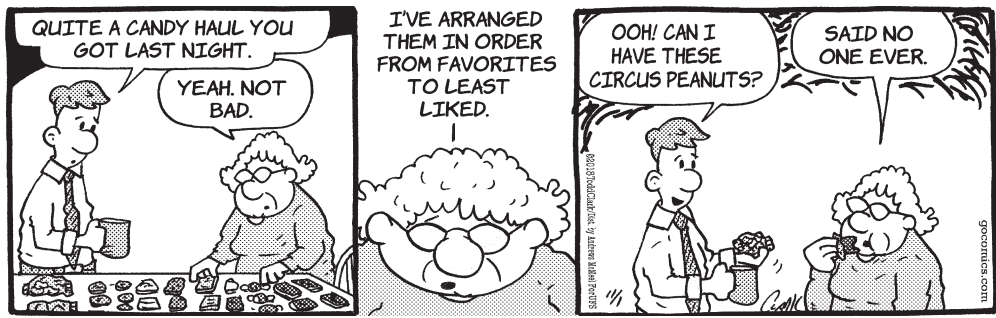
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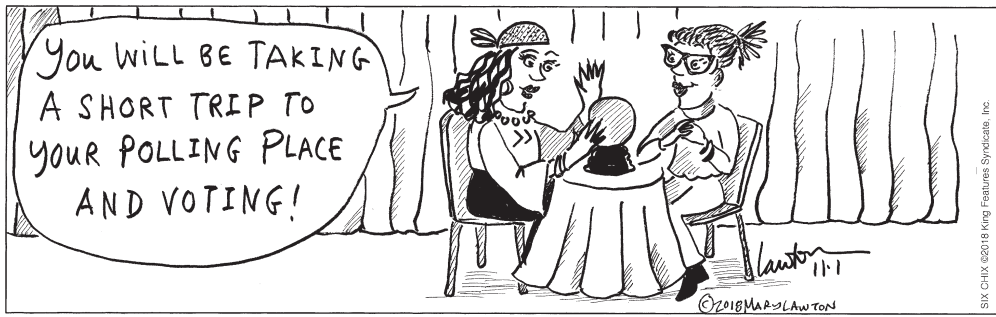
PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



LOLA



SIX CHIX



MUTTS



BABY BLUES



ZITS



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). To distinguish a face from all of the other faces is a human talent that goes back to our more primitive days. If only names were as easy to remember! That memorization will take effort and will pay off handsomely today.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Though it certainly will help to believe you can do something before you embark, it isn't necessary. So if you're having a crisis of faith, just ignore it and take the next step anyway. It's the steps that get you there, not the faith.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Love what you do, and you'll do great work effortlessly. That's good for you and good for the world. If you don't love it, you'll force yourself to do great work anyway. That's how character is built, which is also a benefit to both you and the world.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You know what it's like to want something that isn't a good fit for you. Seeing someone else with what you once wanted will be an eye-opening experience that makes you glad for the way things turned out.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You're naturally influential today. Even your most mild-mannered expressions will be powerful enough to get people to go with your ideas, follow your lead and generally give you the room to do as you please.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The more you want to accomplish something, the less it will feel like work. The struggle ceases to be a struggle; it's just what needs to happen to get where you want to go.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Find out who has the power to greenlight your project before you waste your time pitching to the wrong person. Also, "Never allow a person to tell you no that doesn't have the power to say yes." — Eleanor

Roosevelt
SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). "It takes one to know one" applies all over the place today. For instance, you'd almost have to slip into an unkind state to decide that someone else is being unkind. Also, you know when you're loved because you're loving.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You're brave. You stay awake to what you're doing instead of burying your head in the sand like the ostrich myth. Maybe you can't always control your behavior, but you're aware of it.

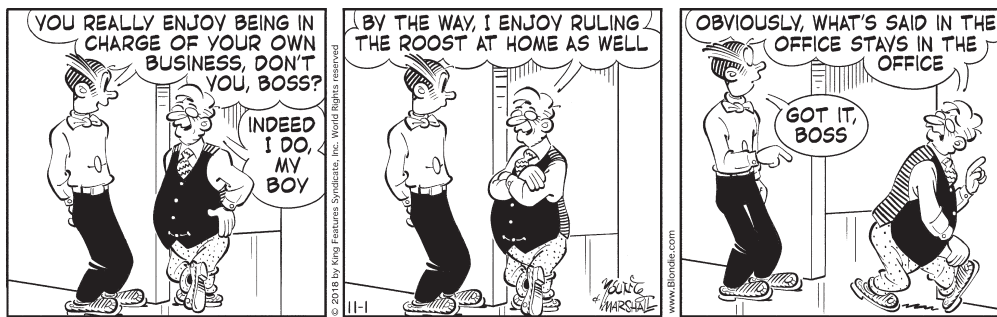
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). When you feel emotionally out on a limb, don't ask anyone else to join you there. The branch could break. Make your way to the trunk, shimmy down and touch the roots.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Hearing the words "I love you" from one you hold dear may or may not give you a sense of security. The thing to work on is loving yourself — a much more dependable source of security.

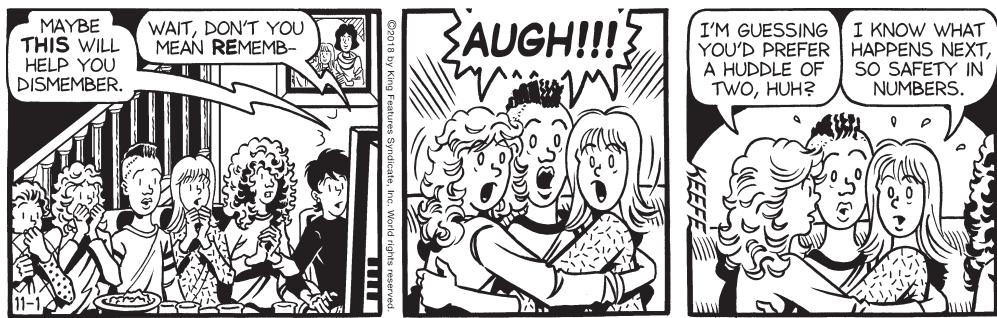
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). No stone gets polished smooth without friction. It's the rub that makes things shine. You'll put some muscle into that today, maybe physical or maybe emotional. Push through resistance to knock off the grime and get to the luster.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Nov. 2). You'll add seven meaningful achievements to your life list before your next birthday. It won't be because you're driven to impress anyone or to receive validation for your work. It will be because you are genuinely curious and/or so moved by certain events that you can't help but throw yourself into the mission. Sagittarius and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 35, 2, 30 and 15.

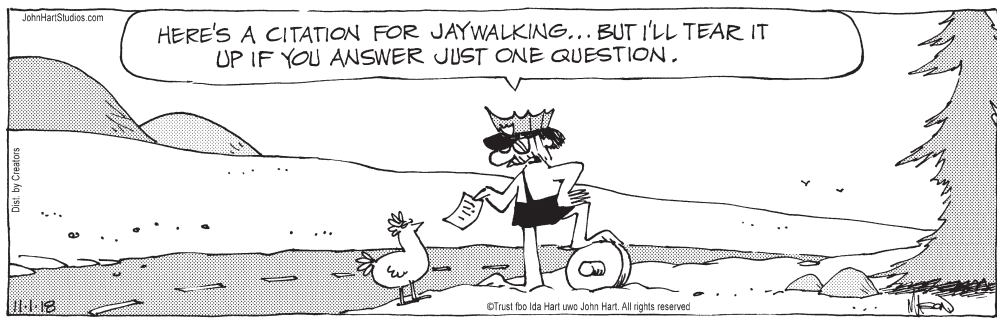
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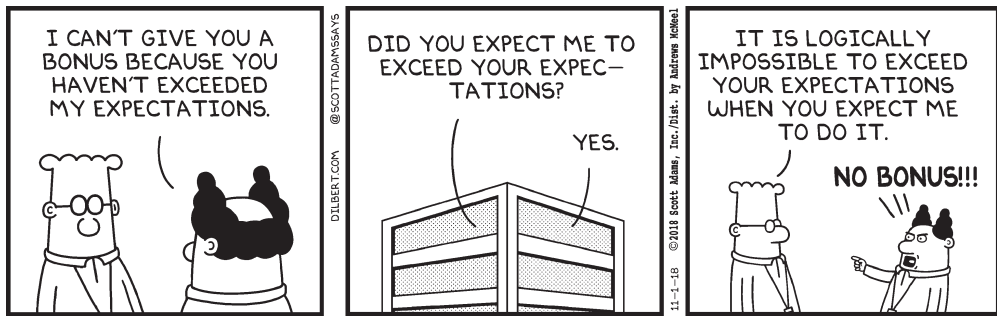
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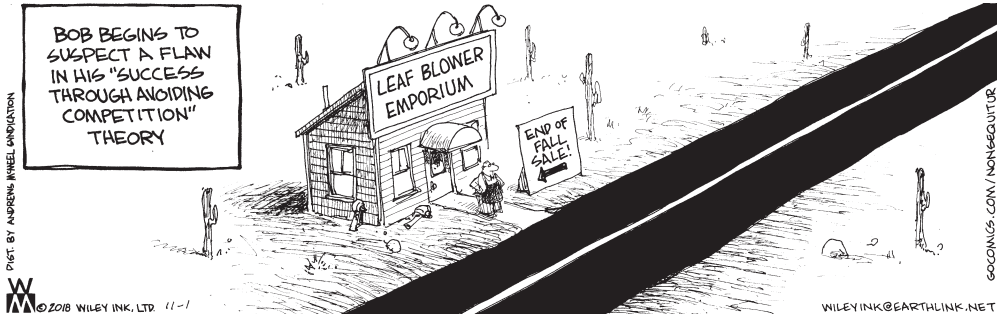
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ROSE IS ROSE

