

Husband doesn't stand up for her

Dear Annie: I am an active member of my small community and have served on many boards, including as an elected official. There are a few community members who have taken their different views on city priorities to a personal level, and that has set up the uncomfortable situation of seeing each other at our children's events and places such as the grocery.

One person, a neighbor of mine, publicly called me names that referenced my looks and actively spread inaccurate and toxic information about me. My husband had to call him over a neighborhood issue, and this neighbor disparaged me, thinking my husband was someone else. The confusion was quickly sorted out, but nothing was ever said about the personal attack on me. My husband did not want to confront the neighbor, and although I wish he would have made a statement of support for me, I supported his decision.

I was able to keep the hurtful behavior directed at me compartmentalized until my husband disregarded my request of limited contact with the neighbor.

A successful watermelon patch provided the opportunity to share our bounty with neighbors. I asked my husband to share the limited melons with our friends instead of the hurtful neighbor, as there were not enough for everyone. My husband ignored my direct request and delivered a melon to this man with a smile.

The fact that I have been betrayed and my feelings are being dismissed is dominating my thoughts and impacting our marriage. My husband is defensive anytime I try to bring up the issue. Please help this 30-year marriage navigate this. — *Going Through a Rough Patch*

Dear Going Through a Rough Patch: It is bad politics — but very common these days — when issues devolve into personal attacks.

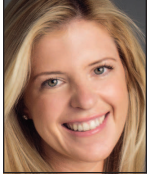
You could just as easily have defended yourself to your neighbor, and you should feel free to do so — politely. But the real issue is your husband and his lack of support for you. It is not so much that he gave your neighbor a melon (a nice thing to do); it is that this was the man who attacked you personally.

Tell your husband how you feel. Ask him why he would give a man who was so hurtful to his wife a melon with a smile. It could be that he resents your involvement with politics or that he hates conflict and simply wants to be a good neighbor. Only he can tell you the answer.

Dear Annie: This is in response to the letters from "Shy" and "Forever Grateful." Bystanders who step up and do something in response to seeing someone being bullied are called upstanders. People who don't feel comfortable standing up to bullies or even reaching out to bullied people because they're shy can go to a trusted adult and explain that they have observed bullying and are concerned for the person who is being targeted. Tipping off a teacher or aide enables someone in charge to observe the bullying and intervene. Most school personnel have received some training around the issue of bullying and are aware of how subtle bullying can be. They are likely to respond when an upstander approaches them. — *Professor of Health Education*

Dear Professor: I hadn't heard the term "upstanders" before; what a great turn of phrase and a great idea. Thanks for sharing your professional expertise.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
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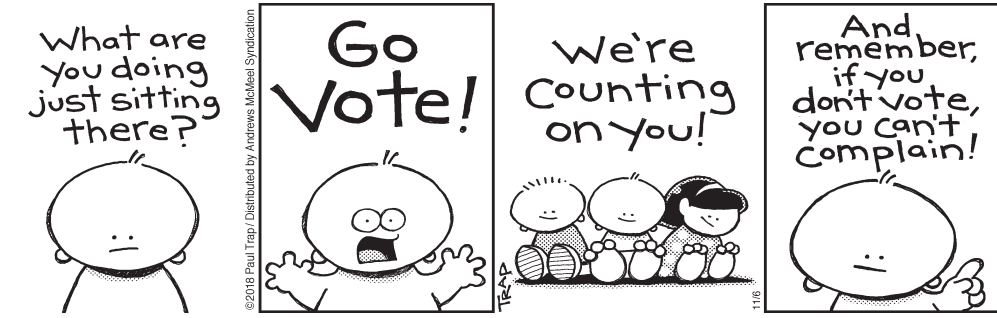
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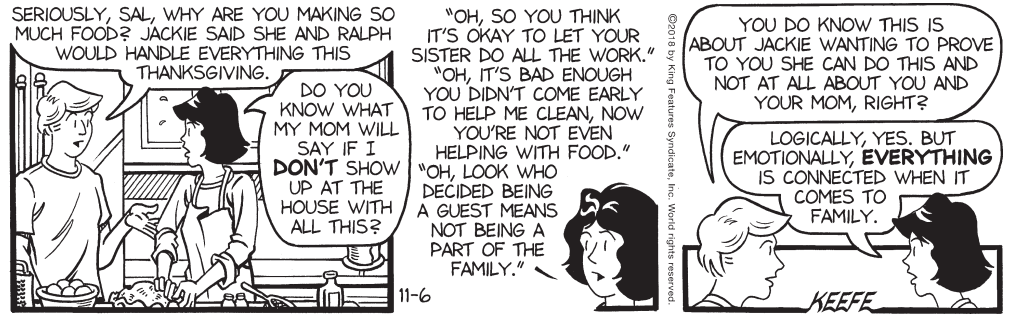
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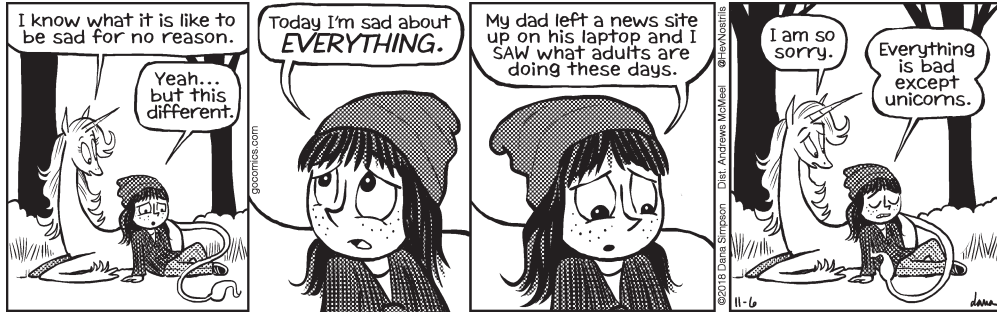
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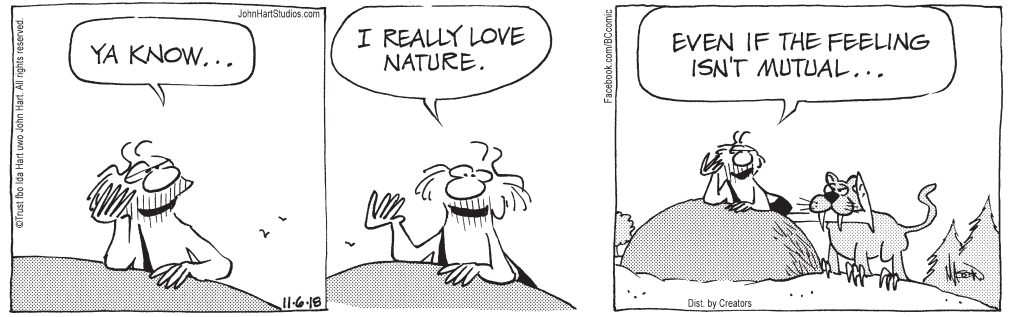
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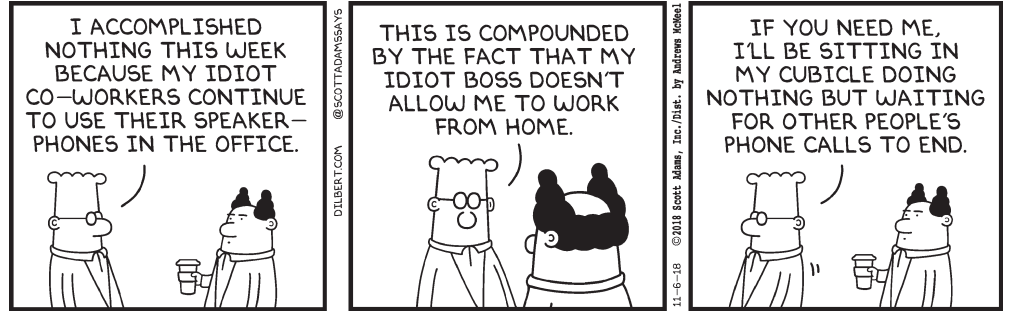
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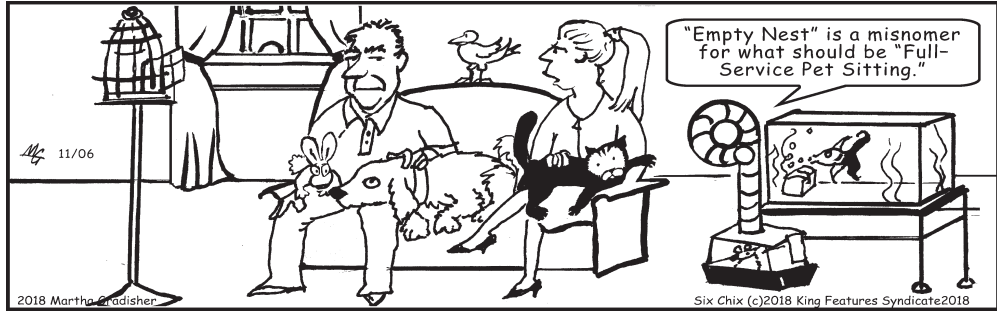
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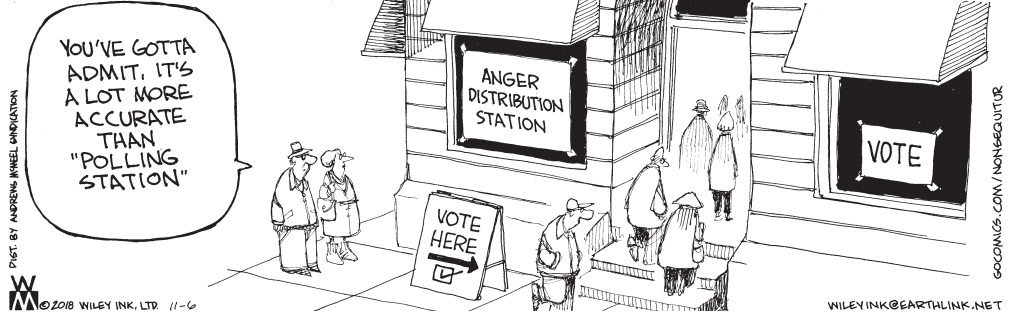
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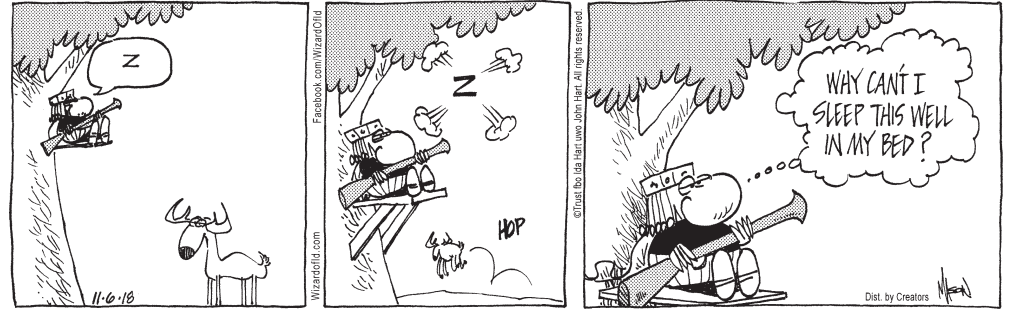
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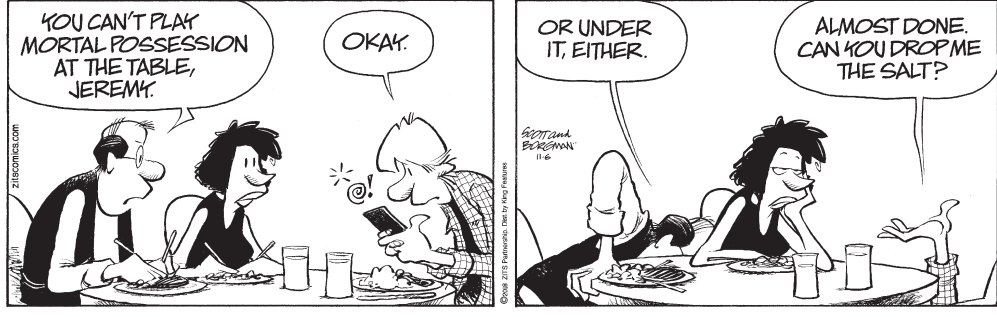
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