

Ditched for a new crowd

Dear Annie: I am a college student and have met few people I would consider friends. However, there is one friend in particular, “Sally,” whom I have helped out a lot since we met. There have been times when I’ve taken her to and from work (she has paid me back for gas), and I even helped guide her to the Lord after a friend died by suicide. I love Sally and consider her a dear friend, but this semester she has begun running with a different crowd. She always parties and drinks and looks for companions. She has completely dropped me, to the point where she ignored a text I sent her about plans she had initiated with me. I feel taken advantage of and unappreciated in the friendship. I don’t want to cut her completely out of my life, but at this point, that looks like my only option. — *The Doormat Friend*

Dear Doormat Friend: Unlike a doormat, you have free will. You don’t have to let this girl — or anyone else, for that matter — walk all over you. It sounds as though your friendship with Sally is, at best, a poor match; at worst, it’s making

you feel less valuable than you are. So take some space from her, and spend time on things and people who make you feel top of mind, not underfoot.

Dear Annie: I agree with “Love Is the Answer” and “Out of Sight but Never Out of Mind’s” viewpoint on not seeing people who are near death. I remember every detail from when I saw both of my aunts near death. I had such wonderful memories of my aunts and spending time with them all my life, but all I can think about are their last breaths — a horrific thing to see. So count me as one who also prefers to shelter herself from seeing someone in this condition. — *Remembering Them How They Were*

Dear Remembering Them: I understand where you’re coming from, but the following letter writer makes some great points about being with loved ones when they die.

Dear Annie: You were very gracious in your response to “Love Is the Answer.” In rationalizing why people avoid being around loved ones who are dying, she explained that often it simply hurts too much

and that she prefers remembering them how they were. Yes, it is painful to see loved ones in pain or dying, but “Love Is the Answer” should think for a moment about how *they* feel. Even if you don’t know what to say or can’t manage to be there long, you may be able to sit quietly with the person or hold a hand or whisper one of those great memories you are trying so hard to hold on to. Neither you nor they live in a vacuum, and I urge “Love Is the Answer” and like-minded people to consider someone else and set aside their narrow focus.

Yes, it is hard, but it is the price you pay for being a person on this earth with a modicum of empathy. How is “Love Is the Answer” going to feel when she is all alone at the end of her life and no loved ones come to be with her because, you know, it would make them feel bad? We all need to look at the situation as the privilege it is to have some small way to ease someone’s suffering. — *Shocked and Saddened*

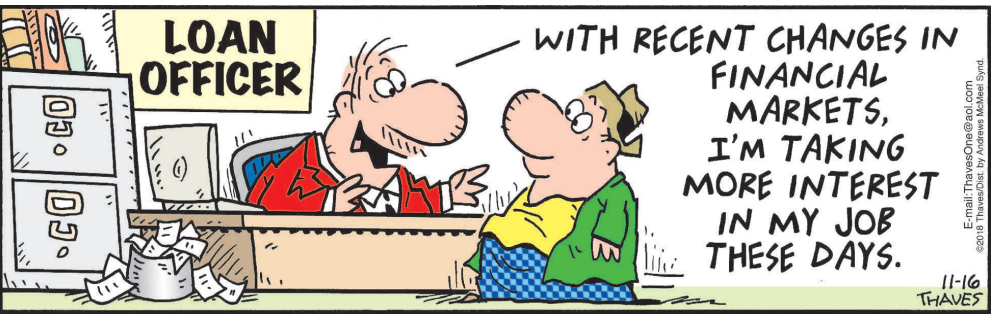
Dear Shocked and Saddened: I’m happy to print this heartfelt plea for empathy. It’s never easy to witness the suffering of family members and close friends, but it definitely comes with the territory of love.

DEAR ANNIE

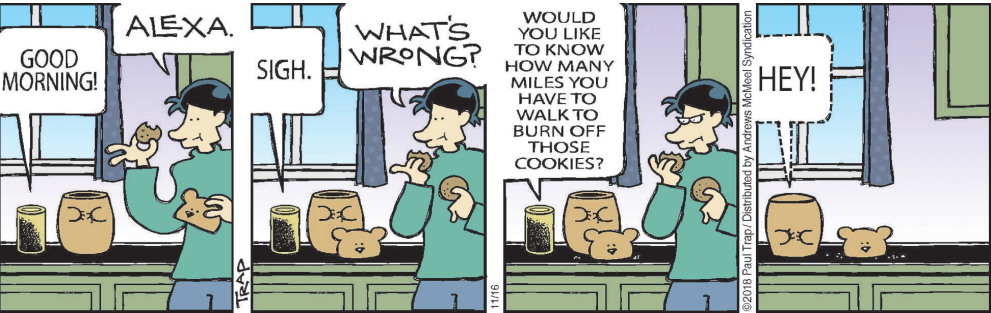


Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

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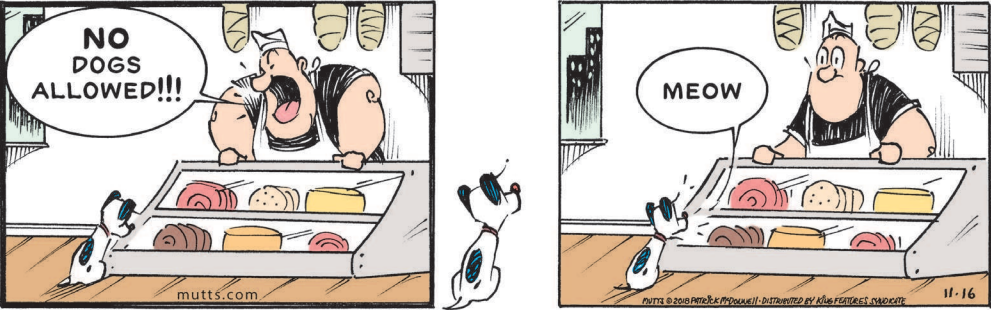
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TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You're on the path, and you could use a lift. Don't look to those people at the destination; they have already arrived and can't help you in practical ways. The help you need will come from one who's just a little further along.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're in the early stages of what will become a very significant piece of work. So pace yourself. Take the time to learn to do it right. This will set you up for future success.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). One person can make a difference and play many different roles, helping in several capacities. But one person cannot fulfill every role. Avoid trying to be someone's "everything."

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Not all of the words and attitudes learned from authorities over the years have been helpful, and you're still unlearning a few of them. Today it will be easy to break a bad habit. Much hinges on one key realization.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). If you're alone, be active and get things done. And if you're in the mood to just hang out, do it with people. It will be relaxing, but you'll still be accomplishing something. Face time always counts for something!

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Those who badmouth others are no better than the ones they disparage. But you learned that long ago. You're an excellent judge of character. Now it's just a matter of finding the people you want to be around.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You don't like to put on airs, and you've an aversion to pretense. Your easy open manner makes people feel safe enough to show you who they really are, and

this puts relationships on solid ground from the start.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You'll feel more successful when you narrow the day's ambitions down to one important task. As soon as you finish that one, interesting new options open up.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). An honest connection is important to you in these times of enhanced pictures and canned responses provided by talking robots. You know the truth when you feel it. It comes with a certain intensity.

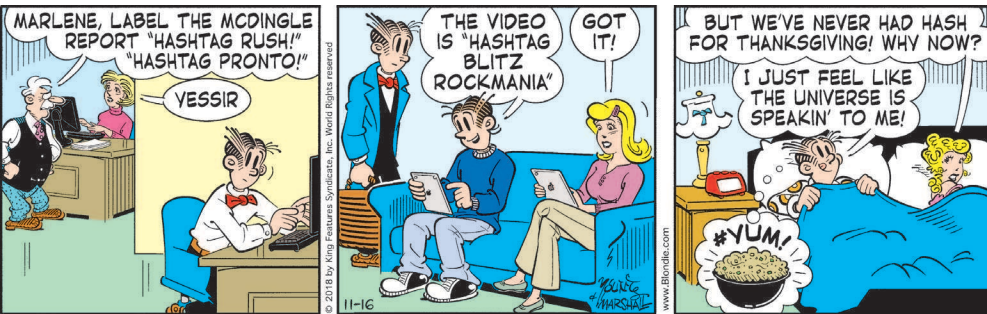
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Generic advice — like "relax!" "walk it off!" or "smile!" — can seem demeaning, which is why you refrain from giving it and also make a point not to be around people who give it. That said, the fix for today may be a little generic.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). While some fear that people will laugh at their work, comedians fear the opposite. Whatever your strength or your fear, there is always someone who embodies the flip of it. Reach out to that person today.

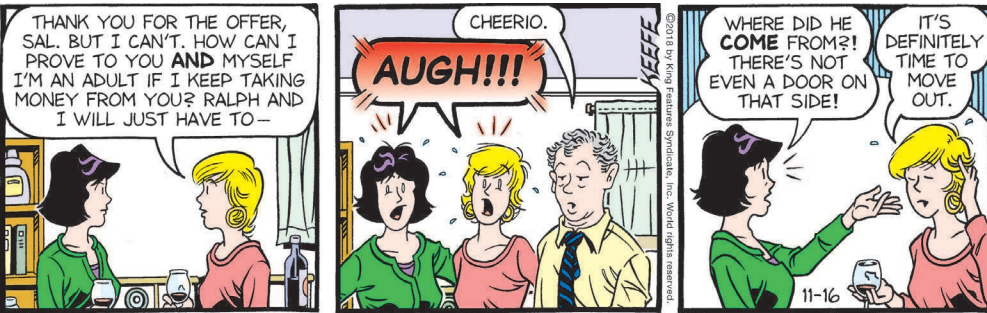
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). More than 50 years ago, the celebrated wit James Thurber commented, "Nowadays men lead lives of noisy desperation." It's even more true today. Someone making a big fuss, possibly on social media, needs help that you can give.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Nov. 17). Your love will be the constant in many people's lives, and it doubles back to delight you in poetic and exciting ways. Other highlights of the next 12 months include travel to a balmy place, a distant correspondence that leads to closeness and a personal upgrade that brings you status. Gemini and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 20, 7, 33 and 49.

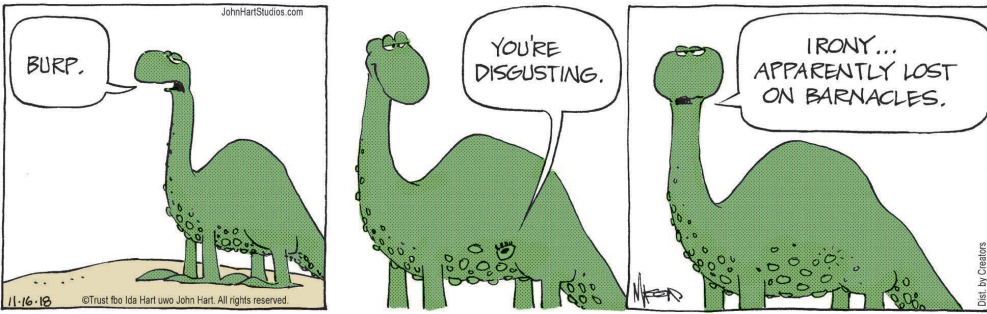
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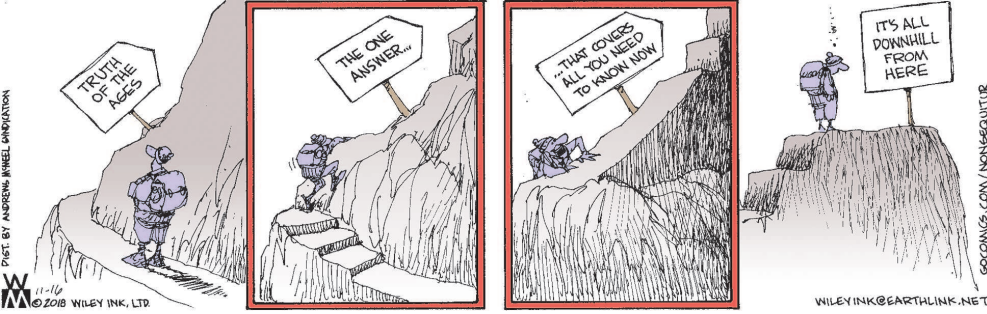
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