

Concerns about intimacy

Dear Annie: The subject of intimacy involves almost everyone, especially couples, so I'm writing to you not necessarily for advice but in hopes of finding out whether other women relate at all to my observations and suggestions about intimacy.

DEAR ANNIE



ANNIE LANE
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

I've been married for 40 years to the man I chose to spend my life with. I'm committed to our marriage, plus I love him. I think he would say the same about me. When menopause struck several years ago, though, I really lost interest in sex. Although I'm not opposed to sex, apparently it's not enough for him that I willingly participate in sexual intercourse; it's also important to him that I have a desire for it/him. Because I don't, he has effectively cut sex out of his life.

That brings me to the subject of intimacy. We all understand the term "sexual intimacy," but I don't hear much talk about "emotional intimacy," and I would like to suggest that the lack of "intimate fellowship" between my husband and me (and possibly

other couples out there) is what has brought us to a point in our relationship where we're going through the motions — working together on a lot of things, even — but not having fun with each other anymore.

We haven't been putting much effort into making it better, either. I think that all he has on his mind is sex, and because he resolves to go on without it unless I initiate it, he's sort of angry with me all the time. I have asked myself whether I'm failing as a wife because I don't feel like pouring on the sex appeal, but everything in me says I would feel more like doing almost anything for him if the emotional intimacy we used to share were restored, which would require him to reopen his heart to me. Maybe he can't see past the "one thing on his mind" to think about what matters to me. For me, though, sexual intimacy — even when I'm not that drawn to the act itself — makes sense only when it's shared with the man who shares his heart with me and I want to see him happy.

— *Committed but Confused*

Dear Committed but Confused: A special thanks for your letter because there are a great many married couples going through the same thing. The good news is that you and your husband still crave intimacy from each other, even though you want more emotional intimacy and he wants more physical intimacy.

Remember, your husband still desires you after 40 years of marriage. My guess is that once you make more of an effort for him sexually, he will make more of an effort for you emotionally. It's figuratively the chicken or the egg. What comes first, the sexual intimacy or the emotional intimacy? Seeing as you took the time to write, I think you can be the bigger person and begin your quest for a more fulfilling relationship.

You have been together in love for a long time, so it would make sense for you both to start working on the relationship. Perhaps a good marriage counselor could help both of you.

While you are looking for a good counselor, you might try reading "Mating in Captivity," by Esther Perel.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). City dwellers know that to drown out the noise everywhere, you have to listen to your own. White noise can help you sleep. Talk can comfort you. Beats can move you. Choose your sounds; choose your environment.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You can tell when someone is being competitive with you, and unless you're actually in an official competition, there's no reason to let the race go on. Sidestep. Don't engage.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). There's something that won't be right until you fix it, and the time to fix it has come. As the Roman poet Horace said, "He who postpones the hour of living rightly is like the rustic who waits for the river to run out before he crosses."

CANCER (June 22-July 22). One secret to your success is that you have talent, and yet you don't rely on it. Consistent work is more important than talent, and the magic mix of both things together makes for an absolute unstoppable success.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). To avoid a thing is a way of focusing on it, and thus attracting it. So avoidance is attraction. Instead, keep your eye on the prize. Imagine what you do want, not what you don't.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're skeptical, and it's a beneficial quality right now. There's too much out there to believe and it can't all be true. Someone needs to sort it out, and that someone is you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Loud and clear is a good way to communicate; it usually works mighty fine. But if you have to choose between the two, take clear. It will outdo loud even at the

faintest volume.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Though it may seem that you've been at a certain stage for a while now, you cannot be contained where you are. You're extending your spirit beyond it, outside it, above it and around it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You have an excellent sense about how to best lead people today. You'll get a feeling about when you should go easy and when you should push things along, perhaps with a hard truth.

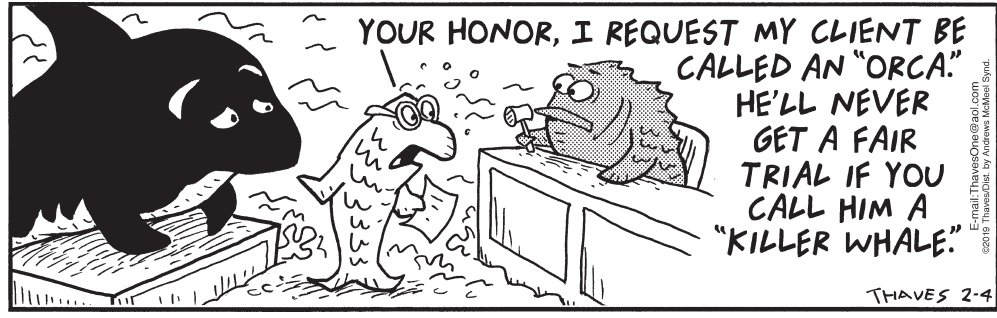
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It's said that crime doesn't pay, and yet there are still criminals at large who would beg to differ — if it didn't count as an official confession. But what about honesty? Of course honesty pays, immediately if not amply.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You've censored yourself to accommodate those younger, older, more formal, more pious... but when you're at home with your nearest and dearest, you want to feel you can just be yourself. Lift the ban.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Maybe you won't solve a problem by walking away from it, but you'll solve it after you walk away from it. Movement and a new environment will juice your mind's problem-solving capabilities.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 5). This year starts off like a Sheryl Crow song in that "every day is winding road," but there's a real sense that you're getting closer to regular contentment, and you'll achieve it, mostly through the building of healthy daily habits. Big strokes of luck will drop in, but it's day-to-day improvements that will matter. Scorpio and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 46, 8, 13, 40 and 11.

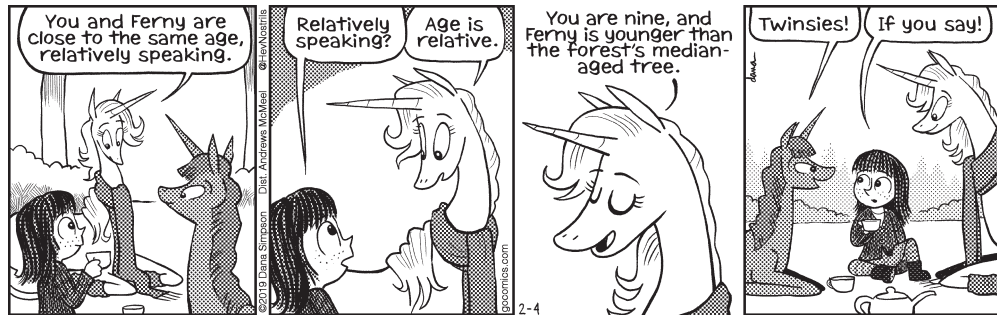
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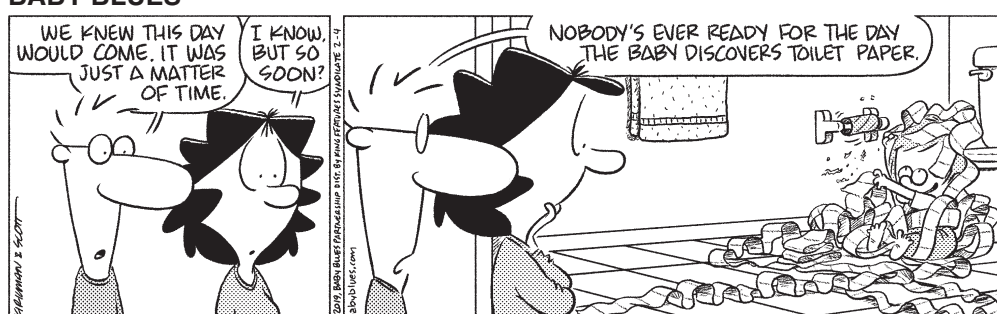
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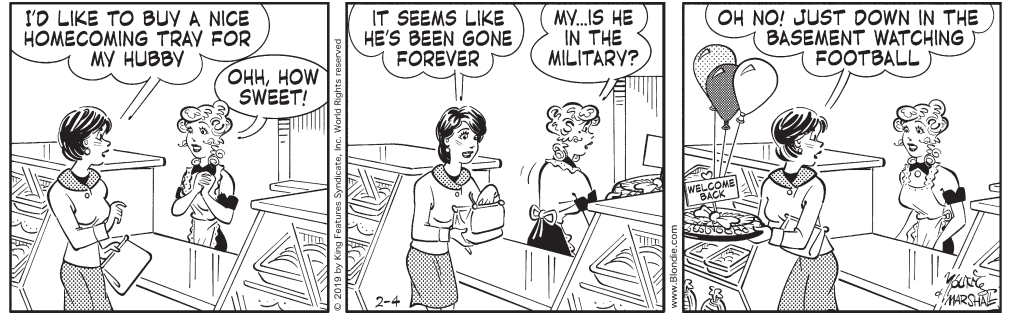
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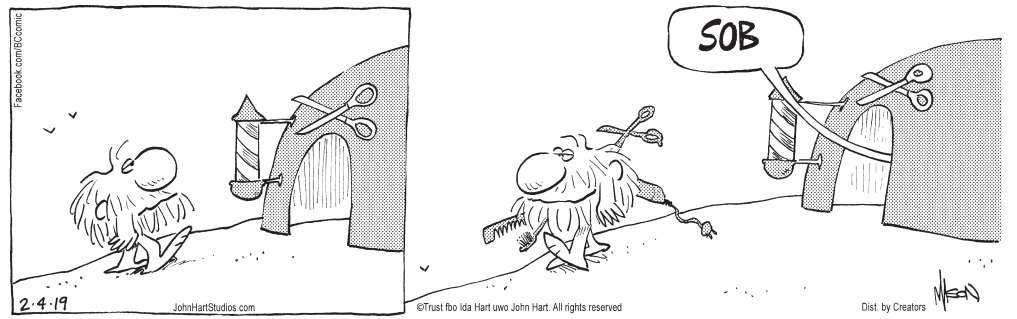
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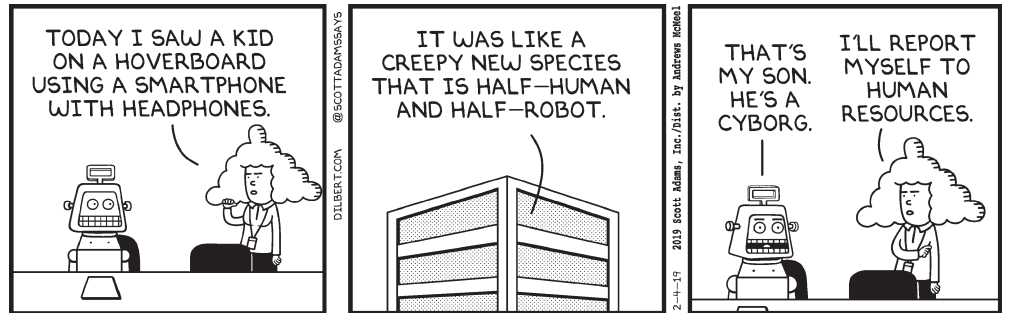
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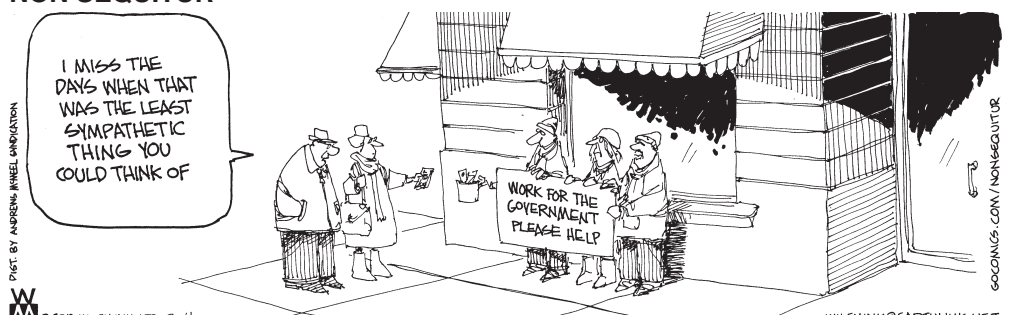
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