

Living among boxes

Dear Annie: I moved four months ago, and there are still boxes and bags waiting to be unpacked. I hate looking at the piles. I want to clean up, I really do, but when I get home from work during the week, I am too exhausted to tackle the mess. And on the weekends, I savor my time to do nothing, and I want to avoid sullying that time with unfun cleaning up. I seem to only find motivation to organize way late at night, when I should be getting into bed. How can I motivate myself to tidy up when I have time to do it? When I look at the mess, I feel so overwhelmed! — *Cleaning Up the Constant Clutter*

DEAR ANNIE



ANNIE LANE
Creators
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Dear Cleaning Up the Constant Clutter: Try looking at unpacking not as something you have to do but as something you get to do. It's an exciting opportunity to make your new place your home. As Marie Kondo writes in "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up" (a great read for decluttering motivation), the task of

organizing your house "should be done quickly" because "it allows you to confront the issues that are really important. Tidying is just a tool, not the final destination. The true goal should be to establish the lifestyle you want most once your house has been put in order." The sooner you unpack the sooner you can start living. So make this an urgent priority. If you have any vacation days available, take a day off work to dedicate solely to unpacking. If not, pick a weekend. It's just one weekend out of your life, and your future weekends will be so much more enjoyable when you get to "do nothing" in a settled space.

Dear Annie: I have a big heart and hate to see anyone having to spend Christmas Day alone, so each year, I end up inviting these "singles" to join my family for a large turkey feast for lunch. I give them plenty of notice. Most of them reply with, "Thanks. I'll let you know." Then they fail to

follow up at all (if they decide they're not coming) or I find out on Christmas morning that they are coming (if they have decided, apparently, that they aren't going to get a better offer). Annie, I start prepping a week in advance by shopping for the supplies I'll need to produce this multifaceted banquet. When people don't respond in a timely fashion, I have no clue about how much food to buy. In the past, I've had huge amounts of leftovers when guests have been no-shows, and I've run out of food when guests have shown up unannounced. This past Christmas, I had six invited guests who refused to answer when I said, "Are you joining us? I need to know how much to cook." If they all had come, I'd have run out of food. How hard is it to RSVP? What happened to manners? — *Not Inviting Singles Ever Again*

Dear Not Inviting Singles: The best test of good manners is patience with the bad ones. There's no need to invite these repeat offenders next time. Consider it a lesson learned in their flakiness, and let go of the (understandable) resentment.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Certain things are in place. Life will change you for the better, whether you want it to or not. Also, there's nothing to be done about it, so you may as well just relax and take it all in.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Love somehow still sticks with you even when you give it away. In fact, the more you give, the more you have, and it becomes really hard to get rid of.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). When your friend is on the phone to someone else, you can tell who's on the line. You're sensitive to the way people sound in different relationships. It teaches you something about your own communication style.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You have quirks. Everyone does. Some people hide them better than others. You tend to enjoy most the ones who don't bother or who can't seem to hide them. Anyway, someone finds your quirks irresistible today.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Even though practical advice will work for many, if it goes against what you're feeling today, then you're highly unlikely to be able to apply it, so why bother? Accept your own stubbornness as the quality that just might deliver you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It's hard to see where you're limiting yourself by complying to norms, but try and step back. Resist going where you're led or answering what you're asked. There's nothing you *have* to do.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). If you're too focused on what they might like, you'll miss out on what you like. You've been cultivating your preferences and aesthetic for a while now. Isn't everyone

missing out if you don't share?

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). If you've ever looked back on old work (or an old diary or historic pieces of your wardrobe) and cringed, well, then today's cringey situation will feel familiar. But isn't this just a sign that you've grown a lot?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Has it been done before? Of course. Just about everything has, but not quite in this way, and not by you. The particulars of your approach and very essence will make this unique.

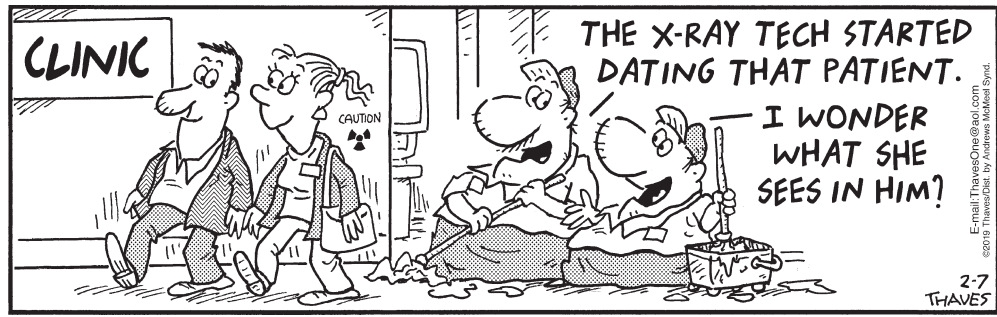
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Being able to tell a good story is a quality that will take you far, not only socially but also with your work and your self-talk, and the way you organize yourself in general.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'd like to think that you open yourself to help from friendly forces, and yet you also notice that you're tensing up around a certain area, as though you must do it on your own. This tension is your inner wisdom speaking.

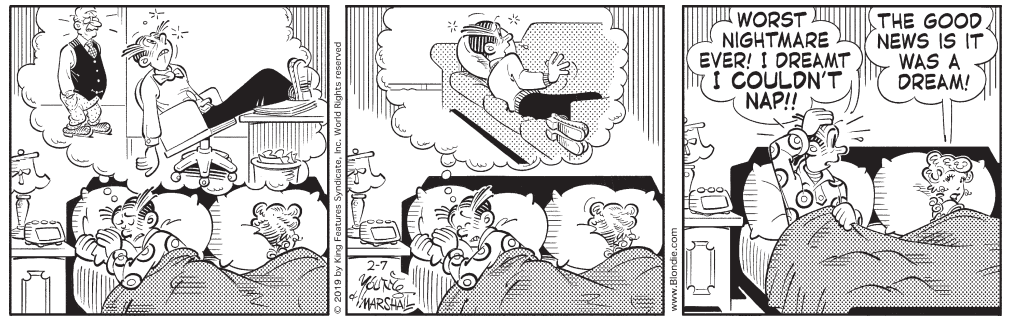
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). There's a need to be filled and you'll get the sense that you're just the one for the job. Now it's just a matter of convincing the others, which will be no problem for you once you forget yourself and just do it.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 8). The easiest way to say and do the right thing is not to rehearse it and work at it, but to live it. It's the truth of your heart. So instead of changing anything about your behavior, you'll focus on generating greater joy in your heart. All good things flow from this. You'll count this among your best years to date. Scorpio and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 3, 2, 19, 40 and 38.

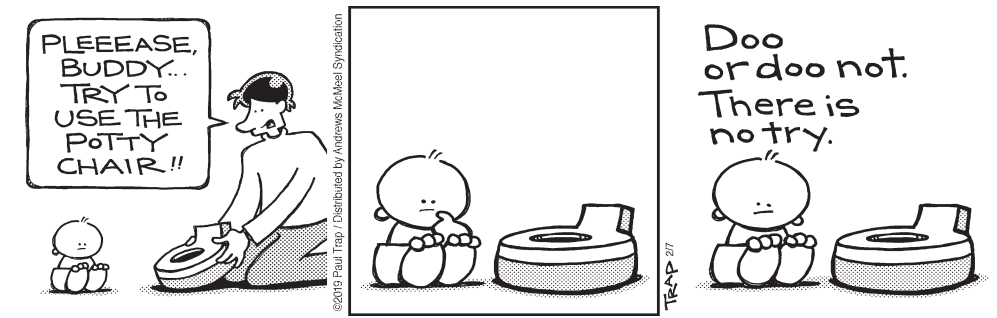
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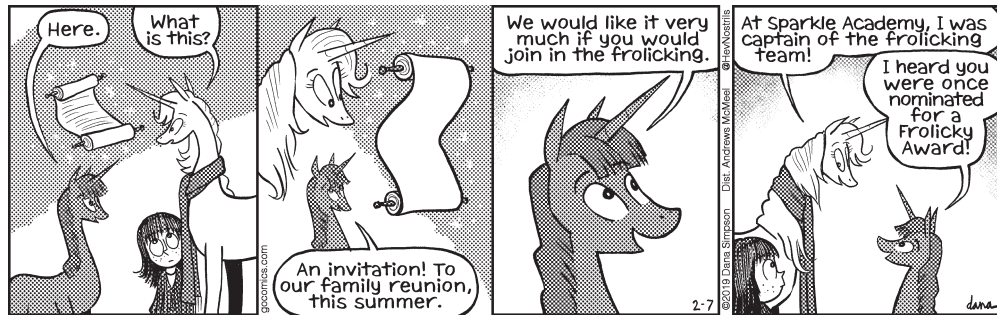
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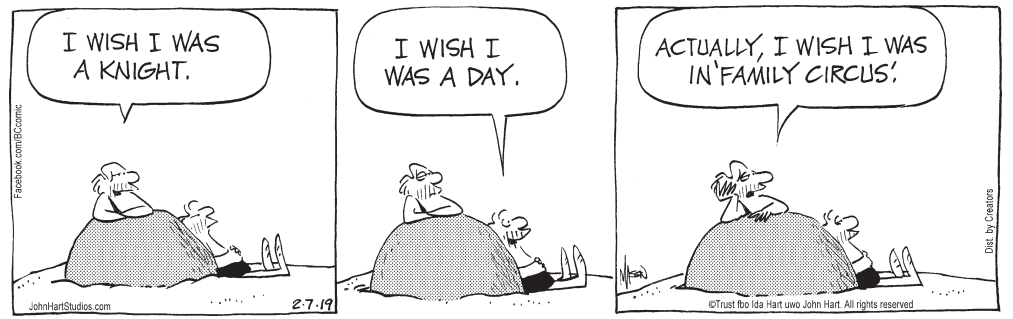
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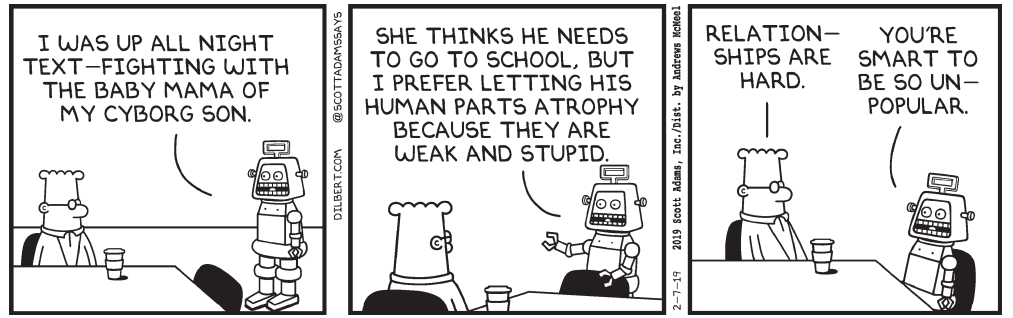
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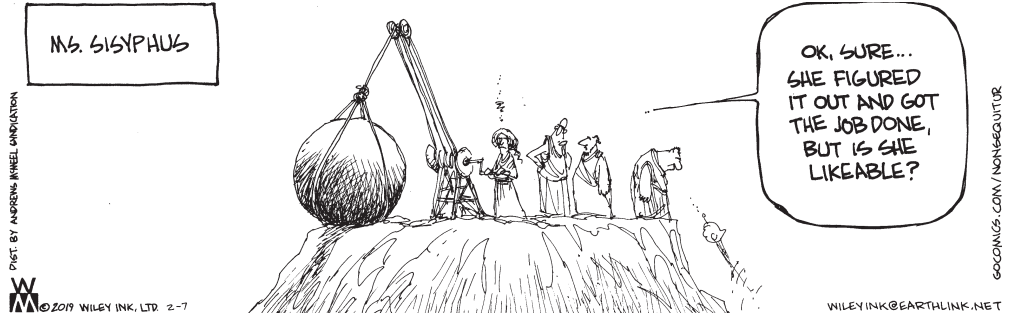
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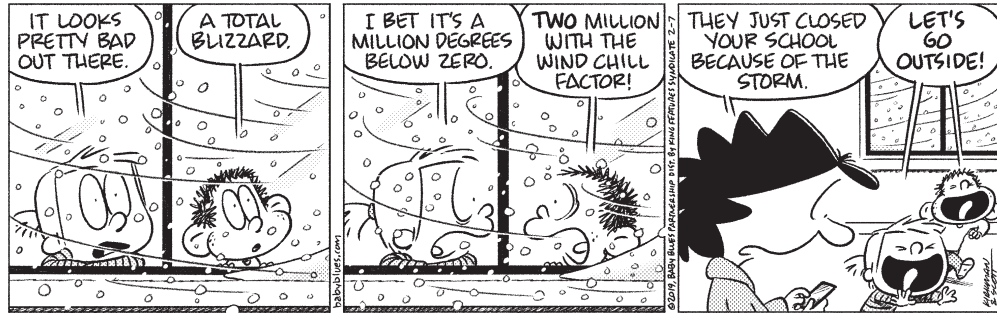
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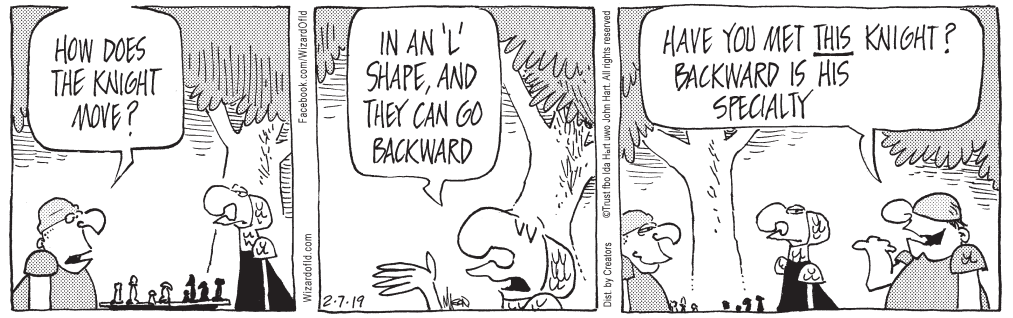
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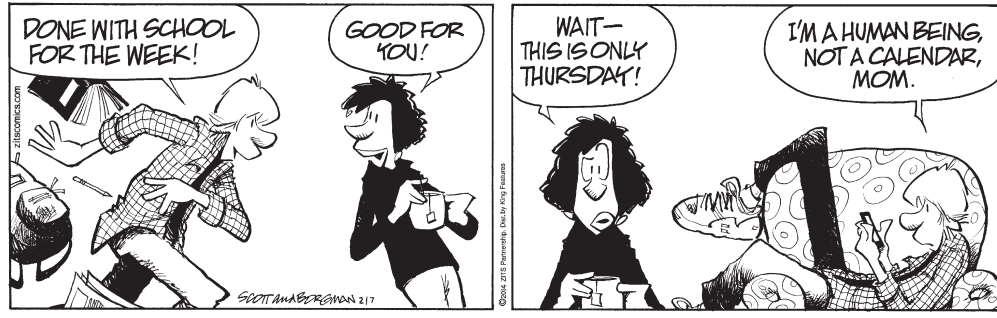
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