

Sad Valentine's Day memories

Dear Annie: Each Valentine's Day, I am filled with incredible sadness. Two years ago, my husband and I were expecting our first baby girl. Her due date was Valentine's Day, and we were so thrilled with love and excitement at the arrival of our baby girl. Her name was going to be Valentine.

DEAR ANNIE



ANNIE LANE
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Sad to say, Valentine was born Feb. 14 as a stillbirth. It was without a doubt the most difficult day of my husband's and my lives. We have since given birth to a beautiful boy, who has brought us joy and hope, but we will never forget our sweet Valentine. My husband and I have gone through lots of grief counseling together, and it has helped tremendously. But every Valentine's Day serves as a reminder. How can we move past this? — *Heartbroken on Valentine's Day*

Dear Heartbroken: I am so sorry for your loss. Words cannot begin to do your grief justice. The very fact that you and your husband took the steps

necessary to heal is incredible. I'm not sure that you will ever completely heal. My guess is that there was life before you lost Valentine and there is now a sort of different understanding of life after her.

You sound like an amazing mother, wife and overall human being. Thank you for sharing your story. As best you can, try to let the love of your sweet Valentine fill you up. Her spirit remains with you and your family. Your letter made me think of what the real meaning of love is. One of my favorite poems comes to mind, and I will share it with you. It is widely known as "Footprints." Its author has been disputed:

One night I dreamed a dream.

I was walking along the beach with my Lord. Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, one belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me, I looked

back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that at many times along the path of my life, especially at the very lowest and saddest times, there was only one set of footprints. This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.

"Lord, you said once I decided to follow You, You'd walk with me all the way. But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life, there was only one set of footprints. I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you, never, ever during your trials and testings. When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

I want to wish you and all of my readers a very happy Valentine's Day. Life is like a sailboat. Sometimes it is smooth sailing, and sometimes the weather is choppy and bumpy. For you, my sweet mother, Valentine's Day will always be a choppy one, but I hope you can find a bit of comfort in knowing that the love you feel for baby Valentine is true love.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You don't just ride the trends; you take the time to study and understand them. And you have what it takes to start a trend yourself. You're more influential than you think.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're currently unable to see how you've erected a barrier to your own success, which is not a problem unique to you. It's a human thing. The view of an outsider will be invaluable to getting a clear sightline and a new plan.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Thoughts are mysterious. Some start inside you, some come from the environment or the ether, all get vetted through your belief system. Though most can be disregarded, at least one today should be cherished, nurtured and planted.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You really do have something to add to the conversation, but you'll probably hesitate, knowing that people just don't often listen to advice. Is there a way to show them instead?

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). As for that corner of chaos in your life, can you make a game out of it? Turn it into a sport and suddenly the untamable energy organizes itself into an order and maybe even becomes fun.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Talking about a thing is one way to sort it out, but not always the best way. Consider that communication is happening on many levels; verbal may be the least of it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your great talents will be improved upon by the challenges you put them through. Your lesser abilities need more care, nurturing and protection. To have stamina in this game, you must know your strengths and limits.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You don't have to reinvent yourself to totally change yourself. Adding one habit is all it will take. Of course, adding habits isn't easy, though it can be simple if you keep it small and make it compelling to repeat.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Be careful not to see things as rules that aren't really. Preferences, guidelines, the status quo ... these things are not rules, so don't give them so much credence that it limits your ability to be creative and think elastically.

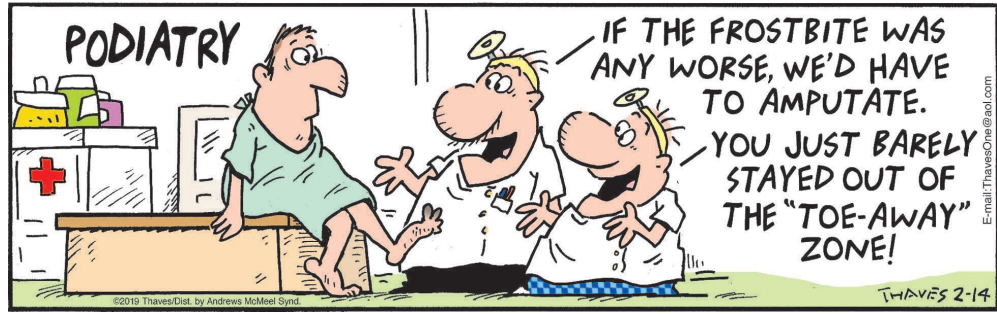
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You can afford to be experimental in your approach to things, especially old and firmly established things. If your idea doesn't play, at least it makes the day more notable. And if it does play, it's beneficially so.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll run into those who stubbornly persist, beyond all common sense, with what's not working. The heels will only dig in further when challenged. Try walking away. Sometimes the best help is to stay out of it.

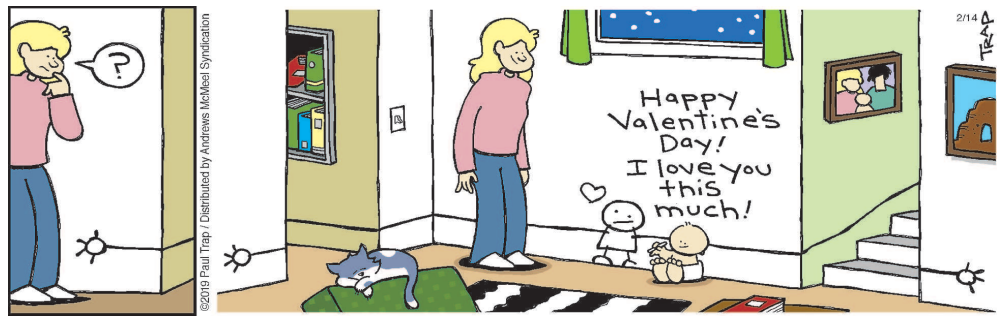
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The thing that's not working for you isn't working for anyone. It's just that you're the one brave enough to point it out. When one small thing about a relationship changes, other adjustments happen to create a bigger effect.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 15). You won't so much solve the problems as you will incorporate them and make them work for you in the next chapter. By May, you'll already be crediting the trouble for making you great and helping you grow through overcoming, build over barriers and recognize vividly who you already are, flaws and all. Libra and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 39, 10, 6, 4 and 16.

FRANK AND ERNEST



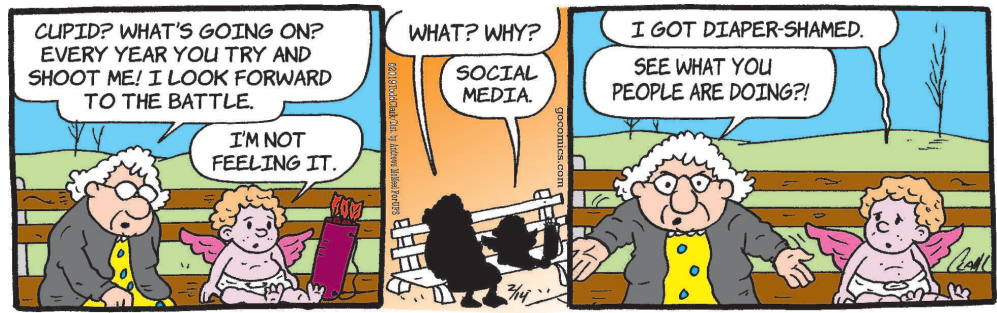
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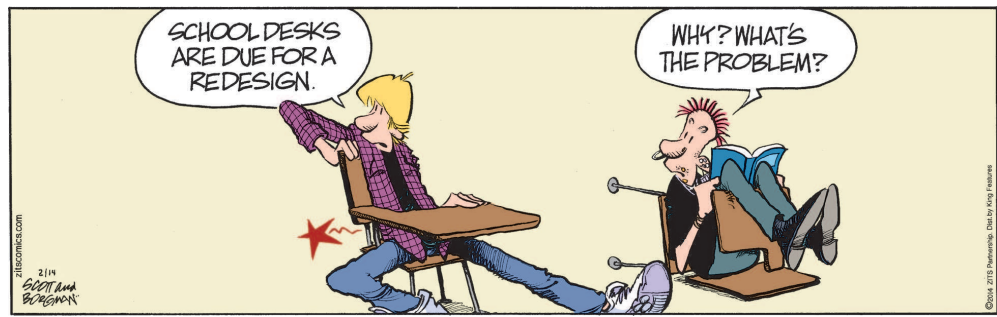
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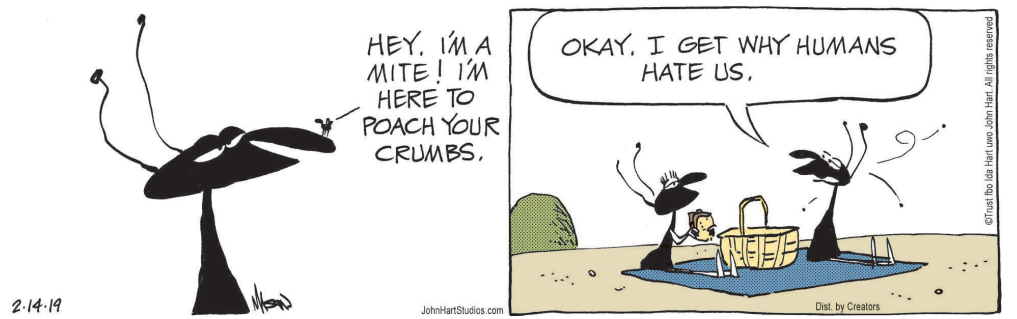
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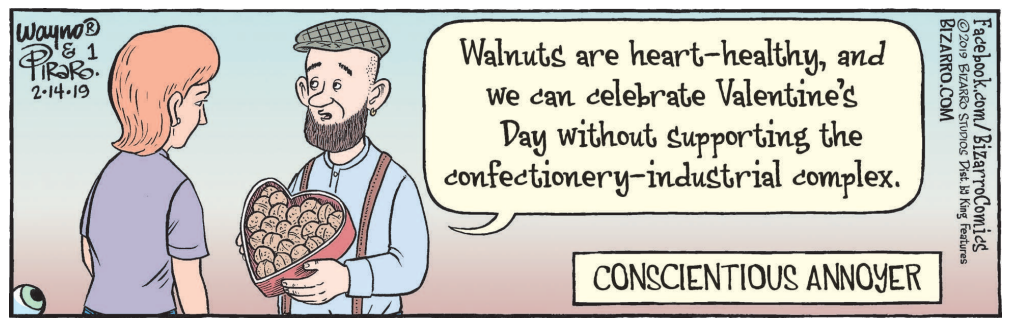
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