

Readers disagree with advice

Dear Readers: The letter from a woman who is thinking about walking out on her 40-year marriage struck a chord, and many of you thought my suggestion of marriage counseling was the wrong advice, even though I said that if the counseling proved fruitless, she would know what to do. My first impression was that seeing as the woman was seeing her own therapist, if her life were in danger, her therapist — who knows much more about the situation than we do — would help her to leave. However, I received so many letters taking a different position that I wanted to share some of them with you.

Dear Annie: The best advice that should be given to a person who has a spouse who isolates and abuses is for the person to reach out to a local domestic violence agency. It was poor advice to have this woman take her husband for couples therapy, as that might be the one thing that could trigger him to escalate his abusive behavior. She needs to talk to a trained counselor or advocate who works with an approved agency for victims of domestic violence. It is very

unlikely that he would change his ways by attending couples counseling. She will not be able to make a clear decision while she is still living in the home and requiring lots of emotional support.

When you're giving advice to a person experiencing domestic violence, the goal must be the person's safety. Every state has hotlines and agencies to help stop domestic violence. — *A Very Concerned Social Worker in North Dakota*

Dear Annie: Your reply to "Conflicted and Anguished" was one of the worst I have ever heard. For you to expect a man to change after 40 years of emotional, verbal and physical abuse, I'd like to sell you a bridge in the desert. — *Wish I'd Done It Sooner*

Dear Readers: I want to thank all readers who expressed concern for this woman's safety and well-being, and I particularly want to thank Dr. Lucy Candib for her letter below, which offers a safe and creative solution to this problem by involving the woman's children and her therapist.

Dear Annie: I am very con-

cerned about your recommendation to "Conflicted and Anguished," a woman married for almost 40 years to a man she describes as verbally and physically abusive. You recommended marriage counseling. Please reconsider your answer in light of what we understand about the dynamics of abusive relationships. In the setting of abuse, marriage or couples counseling can put the weaker party at risk for more serious abuse and even death, especially if the abuser knows that the partner is considering leaving. Around the time of leaving is the most dangerous time for a person in an abusive relationship. Most couples therapists and counseling agencies will not do couples work when there is a risk of violent behavior.

How could this woman talk freely in a counseling setting, knowing that her husband might go home and take it out on her? Her safety is the primary consideration here. Given that her adult children know about the situation and that she is worried about "the right thing to do" to her family, you might recommend that her therapist coordinate a family meeting involving them to help the woman make the safest choice. — *Lucy M. Candib, M.D.*

DEAR ANNIE



ANNIE LANE
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

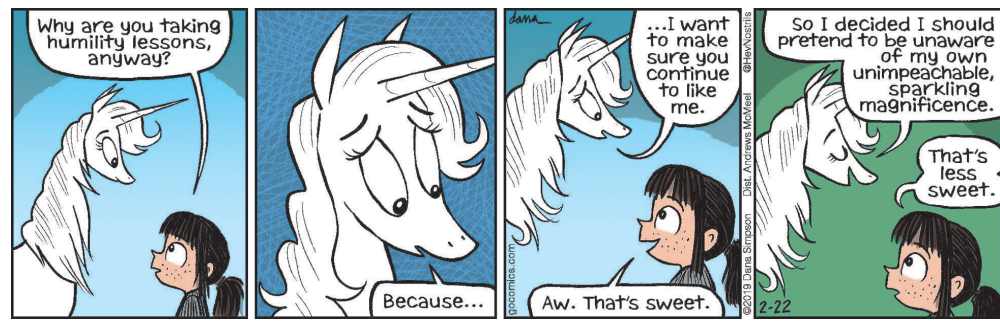
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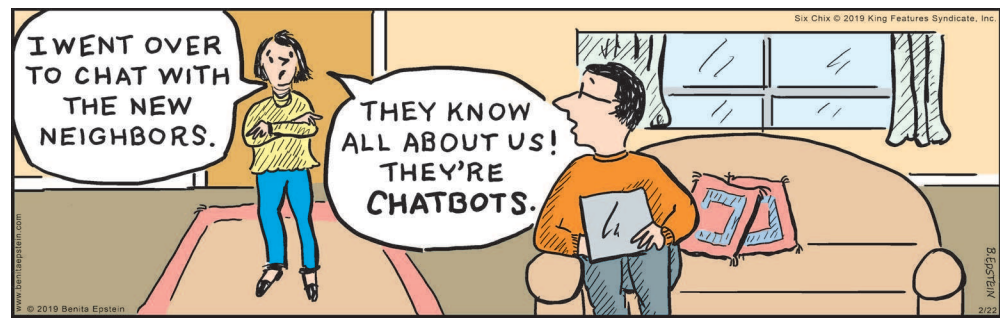
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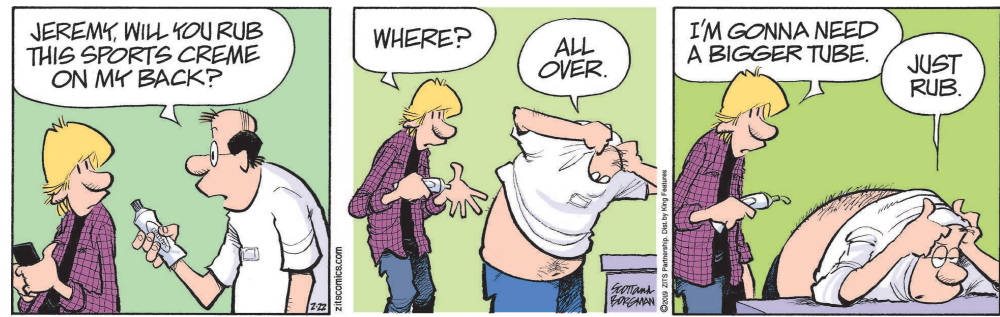
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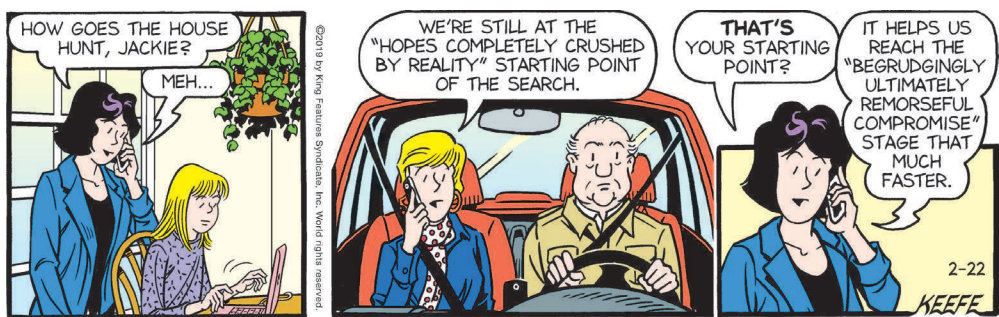
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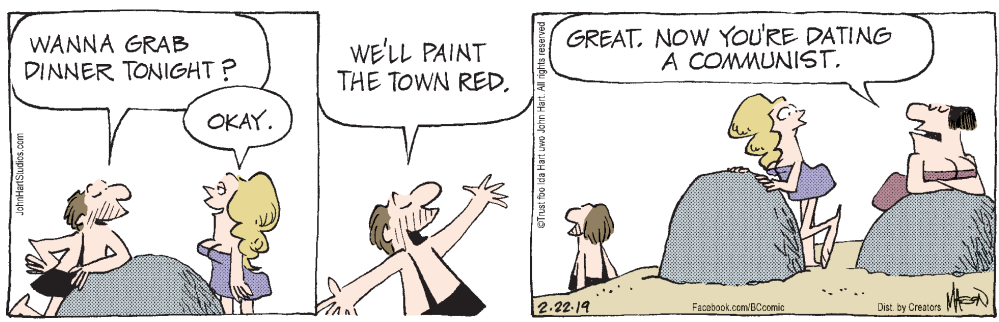
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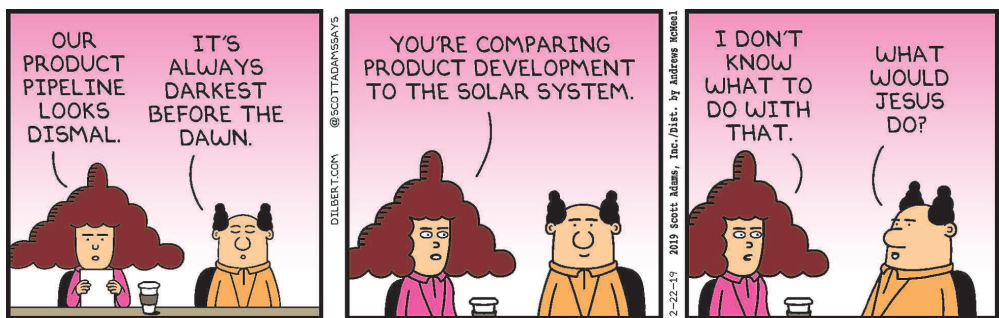
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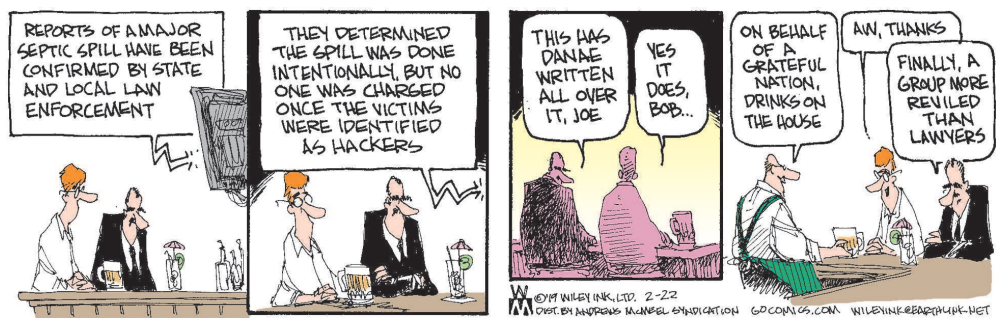
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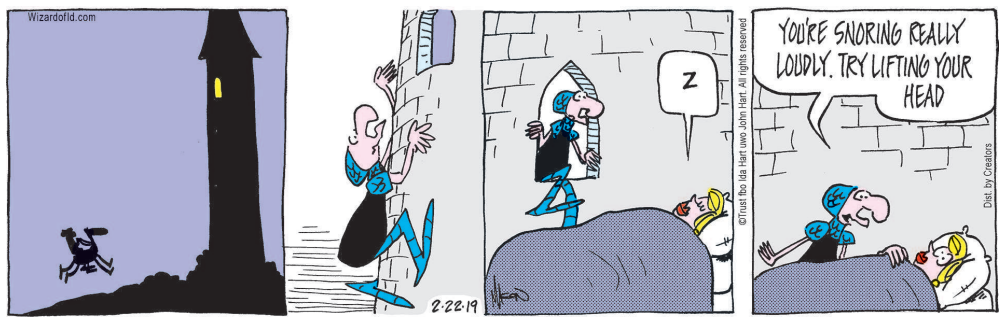
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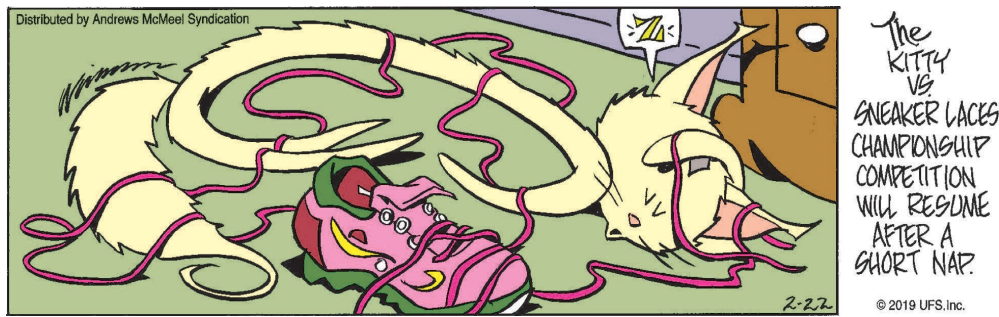
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WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Novelty is an actual human need and there's physiological evidence for this. Ask new questions and make new demands of your routine in the name of seeing it fresh again.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Hope has a much better memory than gratitude. In other words, people who want something from you give a more intense quality of attention than people who already get something from you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). At first the job seemed overwhelmingly cumbersome, and now it's just a pain. That's OK. Like a body-builder, you get stronger by handling this burden repeatedly. Soon it will be like a feather, and you'll have amazing "muscles."

CANCER (June 22-July 22). There's a mystery you need to root out, and it's a layered one at that. How do you get to the bottom of it? By recognizing when you're not there yet and digging a little deeper.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You'll do a thing until it loses its appeal and not a moment longer. It's not because you're fickle, rather it's that time is precious and some practices get old faster than others.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). When you interact with people, you try to give them something useful. The trouble is that you don't always know what's useful to other people. Today, just your being there will be useful enough.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). To live the exciting life of your fantasies, you'll need to erect and enforce certain boundaries. Cultivating your dreams will take time — time that you won't have unless you fiercely protect it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Discipline leads to freedom and freedom may create the need, or the longing, for discipline. Whichever part of the cycle you're in right now, accept it and move toward your desire.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You develop in your personality and in your calling on a daily basis, sometimes in teensy increments and other times in leaps. You're still adjusting to this last leap. Give yourself some time to get used to things.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There are those who will root for you to be your best — as long as it doesn't surpass theirs. A relationship of this type will have a short shelf life, as ultimately you'll have to cross a threshold.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). If you're going to work on self-discipline, don't do it for a boss, partner or for the good of anyone other than yourself. And know that this is noble work. There is no higher dominion than the dominion over your own impulses.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). People are like the wind; they carry the good and bad qualities of the strata through which they flow. There's something about the climate you will want to rise above, so you seek purification.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 23). You don't set out to do things differently or be unique, but it happens naturally as you get increasingly sensitive to the particulars of your talent and contribute accordingly. Relationships will blur lines, thus benefiting you in multiple ways. Working for a cause, you'll be surrounded by like minds — a noble crew. Cancer and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 19, 3, 7 and 25.