

Boss increases my anxiety

Dear Annie: I enjoy my job, but my boss is a bit hit-or-miss. Sometimes he's very friendly with me, whereas other times, he's blunt and unforgiving. I've had lifelong issues with anxiety. It's diagnosed and medicated, but my boss's unpredictability sends my anxiety through the roof. He's not very approachable, so I don't feel comfortable talking to him directly any more than I already have. (I once let him know that his bluntness was stressing me out, but he just brushed me off.) I've also let his boss know that he causes me a lot of anxiety. After I told his boss that, things got better for a while. But lately, my boss is as passive-aggressive as ever. I truly don't know how to navigate his moods. I hate having to play this guessing game. I love everything about my job except working for him. He's the head of my department. I don't foresee him leaving that position any time soon. What do I do? — *Managing a Moody Manager*

DEAR ANNIE



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secret, but bosses are, in fact, human. Your manager could be stressed over things in his home life, spread thinner or work than you realize or even battling his own mental health issues. Whatever the cause of his moodiness, it's not you. So do your best not to take it personally. Develop a healthy sense of detachment — an umbrella to keep you dry no matter your boss's emotional weather. I also recommend seeing a therapist regularly, if you're not already, and talking through this with him or her. He or she could help you erect healthy boundaries and manage your anxiety.

Lastly, if your boss's moodiness escalates and he lashes out at you or behaves in any way that would constitute harassment, document the incidents and go to human resources.

Dear Annie: I'd like to respond to the letter from "Not Inviting Singles Ever Again." I am one of the singles invited to join families for Christmas Day dinners. I'm not single by choice, but I've adjusted. My

wife died several years ago, and my children live far away. I have often been invited by people with "a big heart" to join them. The people have been very cordial and kind, but I still have felt strongly like a fifth wheel. I would much rather be alone and open a can of soup than sit there with a fake smile on my face, pretending I am enjoying myself. If I politely decline an invitation, I get the third degree, and it might be more unkind to truthfully say I'd rather be alone than with the hosts. So I think I am speaking for many singles who were happy when "Not Inviting Singles Ever Again" said she is not going to invite singles again because of a lack of RSVPs. There are two sides to everything. Please, just leave me alone. — *Anonymous*

Dear Anonymous: I am sorry for the loss of your wife. I appreciate your speaking from the heart. You're absolutely right that there are two sides to every story, and your honesty about your feelings here may help give "Not Inviting Singles Ever Again" and anyone else in her shoes a more complete perspective.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). As for this environment you've landed in, you've seen so much of it that you no longer really notice what's really there. Something will happen to wake you up though, and all of this will look different to you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Your responsibilities are many today. Still, it's nothing you can't handle. You've worked up to this. And though it's not exactly what you had in mind, it's preparing you for exactly what you have in mind.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Life has officially gotten too predictable. That ends now. When things don't go your way, you'll be glad for the surprise — if not immediately, then eventually.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It's not working for you. You agreed to this though. Sure, it was a long time ago. You were a different person then. Still, a deal is a deal. The good news is that new arrangements can be made. Talk things over.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Maybe the fixes won't be easy, but they will be fixes, and you really need for this situation to work a little while longer. So go ahead and make them. Bonus: They won't be too expensive.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Most people don't believe that others have as complicated an inner life as their own. And yet, of course, they do. There will be luck for those who anticipate the complexity of others and really try to understand it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Resolve to be welcoming to new people coming into your life, even though you have no idea how long they'll stay and what the stay will be like. Regardless of what happens, you'll never regret making a warm first impression.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). This choice before you is more significant than what you're used to. Wisely, you understand that your truth may be different from the truth of others around you. Still, you can only go with yours and hope for the best.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). People assess things incorrectly. For instance, what one calls excellent chemistry, another considers just the baseline, status quo of getting along. You assume nothing and are luckier because of this.

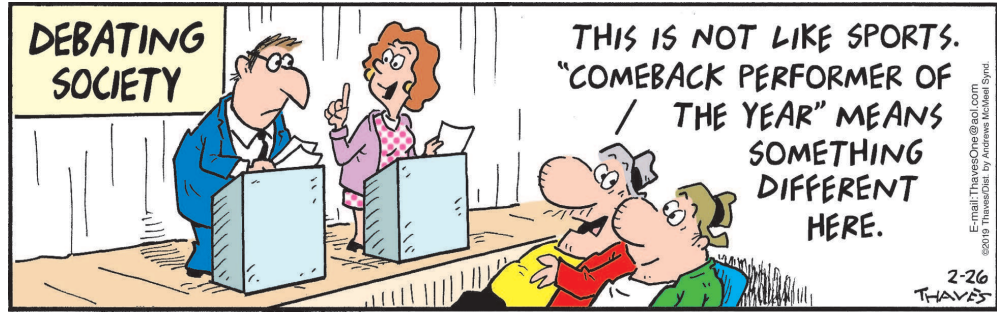
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). That vaguely restless feeling sets in again. You'd like to blame it on something, but it seems to be a function of life itself. Don't worry; it will go away right after you consciously coerce yourself to jump into a new experience.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The lines will be blurred between necessary and unnecessary. Of course, what's fun seems much more necessary than it is. On the other hand, fun itself is actually necessary, so factor that in, too.

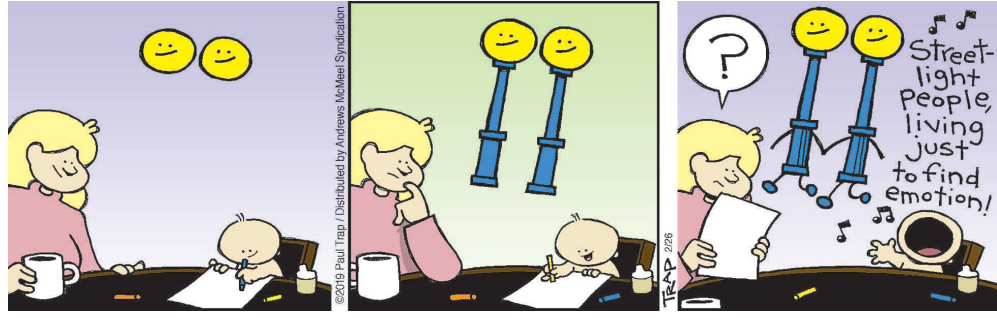
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You get the feeling that an entire arena is either no longer for you anymore or never really was. That's OK. What is living if not experimenting to see what works? Don't waste a minute more on what doesn't.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 27). Your birth was a gift to the planet. If you knew how your actions affected the timeline of this reality, you might be too self-conscious to do your thing. Anyway, it works beautifully when you assume your actions matter, and do your best. Music and love go together this year, as do business and physical health. Scorpio and Libra adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 4, 42, 19 and 38.

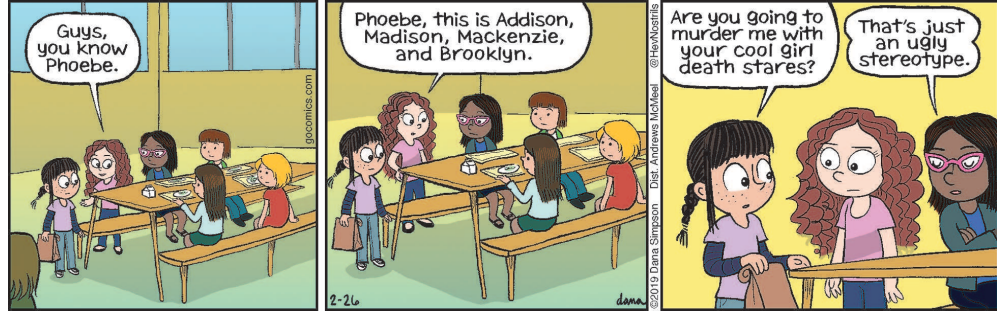
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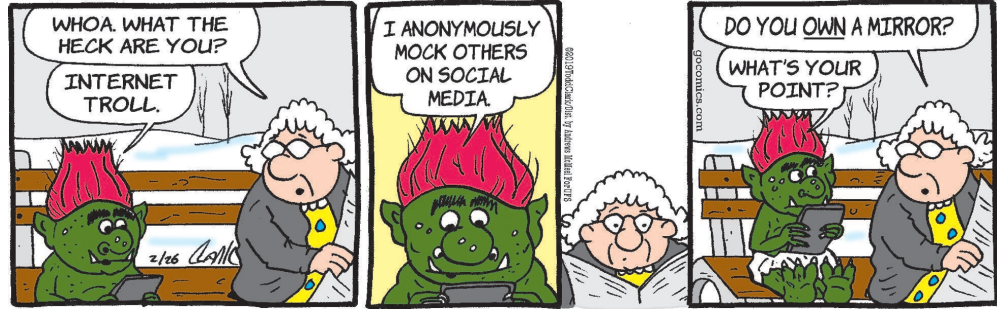
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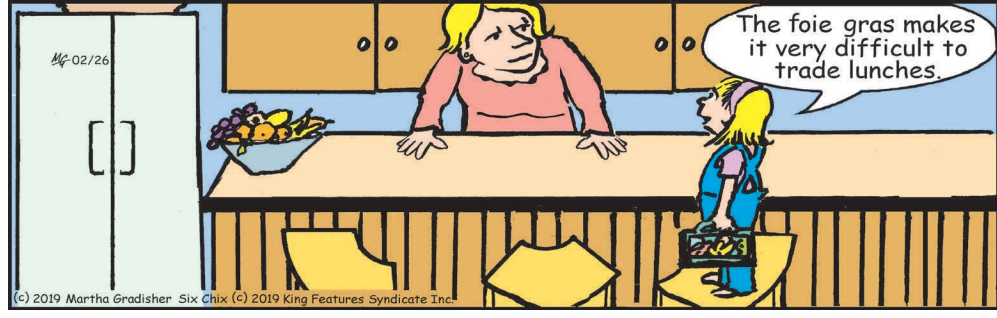
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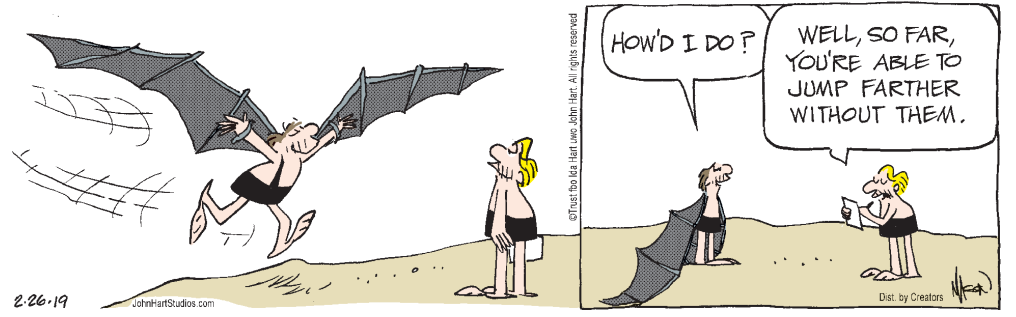
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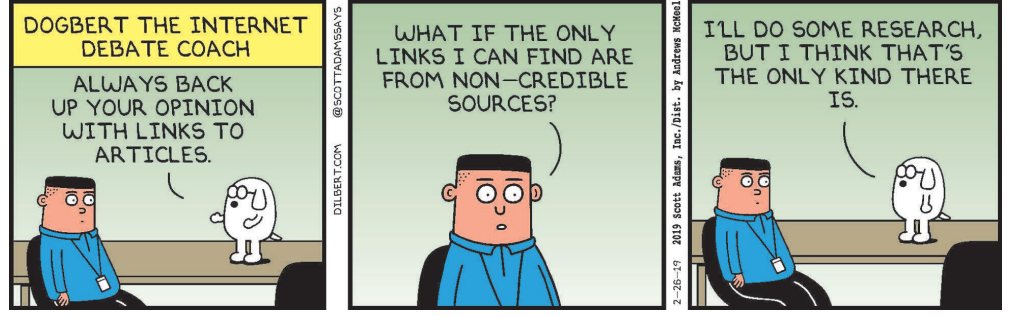
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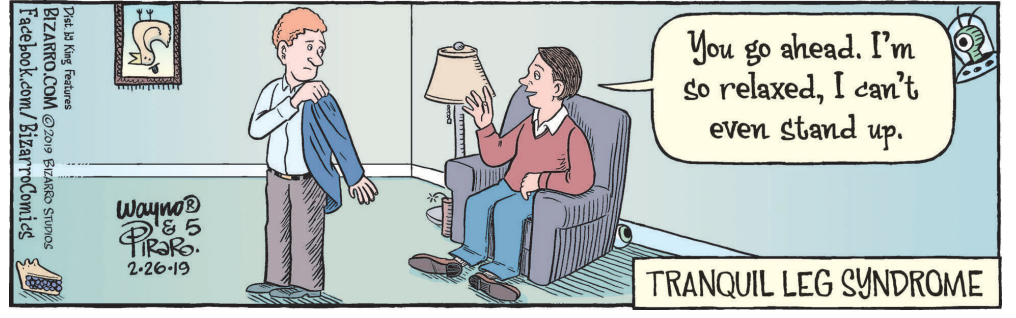
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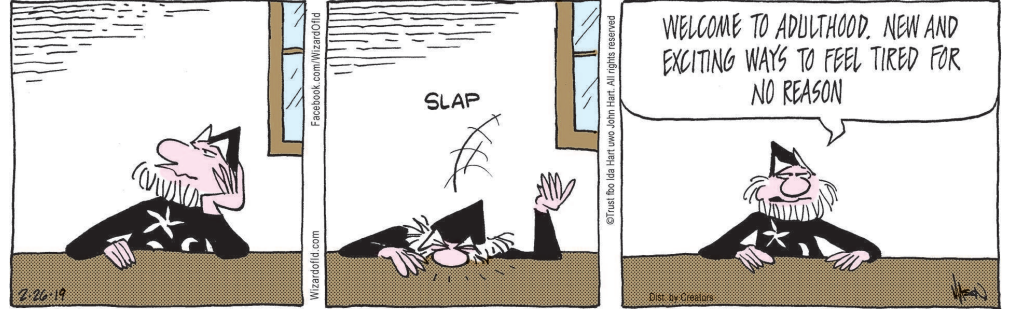
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