

# Cousins clamor for time

**Dear Annie:** I have four cousins, whom I love a lot. There's "Piper," the eldest at 10, with whom I connect on a social and BFF level. The second-eldest, 8-year-old "Wes," loves to play video games with me, as well as trade Pokemon cards. Then there's "Ellie," 7, who likes to bring out my fun and imaginative side. "Evelyn," 6, is the adorable little munchkin whom I love as if she were my baby sister.

All of them are so awesome, but lately, my cousins have been fighting over me. I used to spend a lot of time with Piper because she's the most relatable, but then I realized I was barely giving time to anyone else. So I started spending more time with Wes, Ellie and Evelyn. But it's starting to get harder and harder to spend time with every single one. Someone is always getting angry with another for taking me away. I really do love them all. I just wish there were a way that I could spend time with them all at once. What do I do? — *Troubled Cousin*

## DEAR ANNIE



ANNIE LANE  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

**Dear Troubled Cousin:** You listed a series of interests that each cousin has. My suggestion is to take each one out individually for a fun day with you, doing some activity in which you can devote 100 percent of your attention to the cousin. After each cousin has had your undivided attention, it will be much easier to gather as a group, and it should make the get-togethers more enjoyable.

You must be a very special person to have all of your cousins clamoring for your attention. It is not surprising that when you describe the cousins, you talk about their interests and what makes them special. No wonder they love you so much!

**Dear Annie:** This is in response to the letter from "Loving Mother," the woman who receives gift cards for clothing stores when she doesn't need clothes. She said she would prefer generic cards so that she could buy things she does need.

This happens to me, and I have the perfect solution — and none of the givers is the wiser.

When occasions call for gifts, she should use those cards to buy gifts for the people who bought the cards for her. Obviously, the cards are from stores they like, so the gifts should work out. Most department stores also sell small electronics, perfume, jewelry, greeting cards, etc., so her gifts don't have to be limited to clothing.

In her letter, she said she "received almost \$400 in gift cards" at Christmas. Woo-hoo! That's probably equal to the amount of money she spends in a year toward buying gifts for others. Seeing as she has to buy gifts anyway, why not think of the cards as a bank account to be used for that purpose?

She could also give the gift cards to charity. Think of all the women's shelters with residents needing new clothes for job and apartment hunting or simply to stay warm. If she goes to church, she could drop a card in the collection plate with a note that it should go to a needy congregant. If that wouldn't put a smile on her face, what would? — *Been There, Still There, Love It There!*

**Dear Been There:** Thank you for your great suggestions.

## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Stealing attention is an act of real theft. Attention is the true value of life. Surround yourself with honest people, not robbers who will devalue your efforts by drawing attention away from you and toward them.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** Trust and keep working. The change is coming. Your process will go from weeks of fearful, uncertain struggles to a new era of fully informed, powerfully purposeful, smooth and meaningful days.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** People who ask you questions and get really interested in how you are may also have big news to share themselves — news you'll never learn until you boomerang the conversation.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** While you know that your work matters, and that you matter, you'd like a little more in the way of daily signals around you to remind you of this. There's something wholesome you can do to get better mojo flowing through your life.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Your money is the absolute cheapest thing you can put "where your mouth is" today. Your work is worth way more than that and so is your attention and time.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** The principle of inertia suggests things will maintain their current state of activity (or nonactivity) until something stronger comes along. In today's case, you'll keep buzzing along until overtaken by a profound need for sleep.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** There are the lucky few who get encouraged along life's path before they do anything of merit. Mostly though, it happens in reverse. Most must do many,

many things of substance before the rest of the world finally catches on.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Why be quietly ashamed or try to hide your mistakes when you can call them out, examine them and learn from them? Everyone makes them, even those regarded as the best among us.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** You may have an inner child, but you also have an inner babysitter today. Maybe it's not as strict as the parental units, but it's still in charge of making sure you hit all the basics.

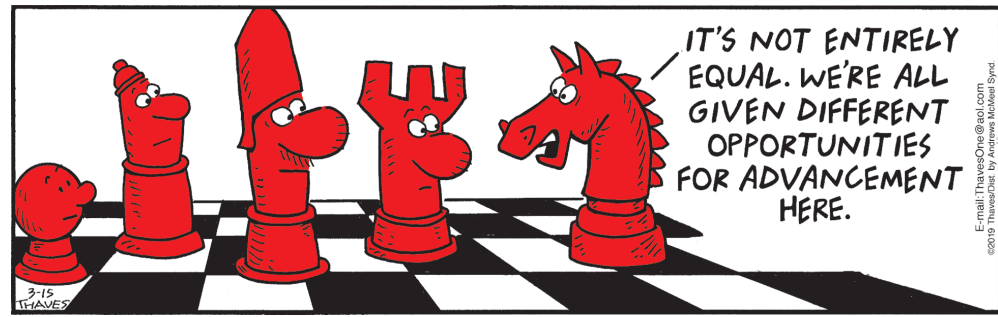
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** The hard and dirty work is something to do yourself because it also happens to be the work that will most keep you aware, awake, strong and on-purpose.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** The day's events will remind you how your decisions affect others. You don't always want them to, but that's just how it works for someone as connected to the fiber of your community as you are.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** You'll find the amusement and levity of life. This won't be hard, because there's a sympathetic resonance in you that rings out when you're anywhere near funny people.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (March 16).** For the next three months, there's important work you'll do inside yourself and out of the public eye. This is laying the groundwork. Suddenly, you'll feel like sharing. You'll touch lives and change the established order. On a practical level, a move of convenience will turn out brilliantly for your domestic flow. Virgo and Aries adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 40, 20, 1 and 15.

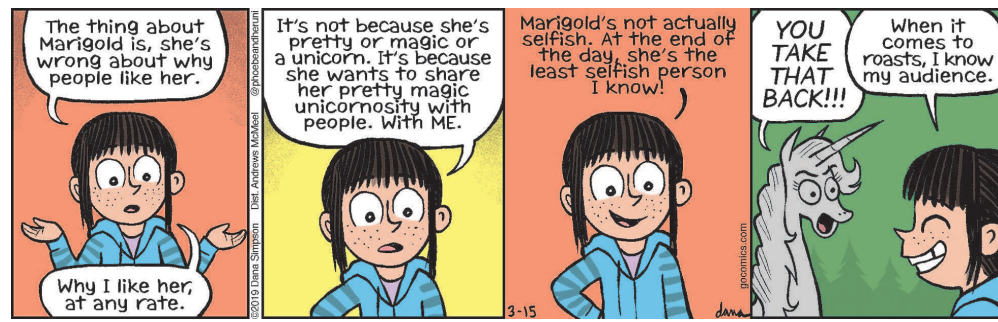
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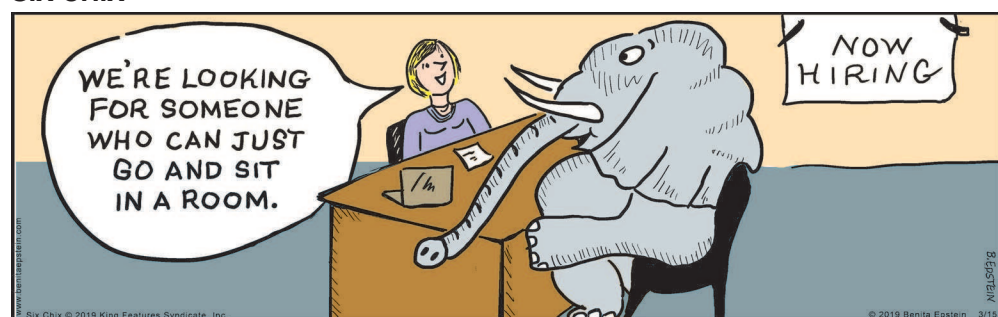
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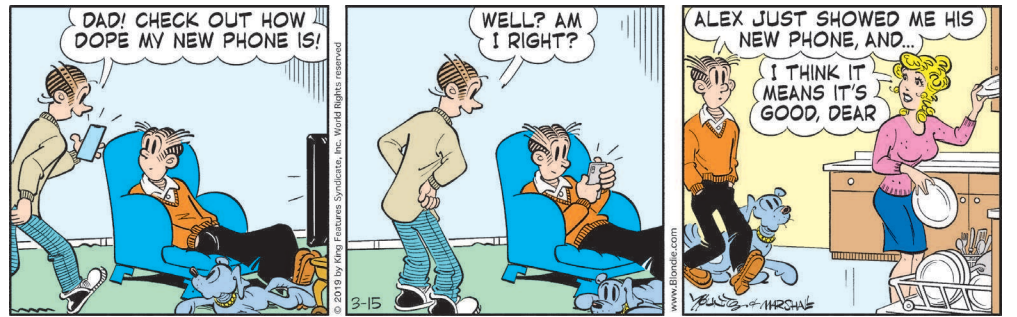
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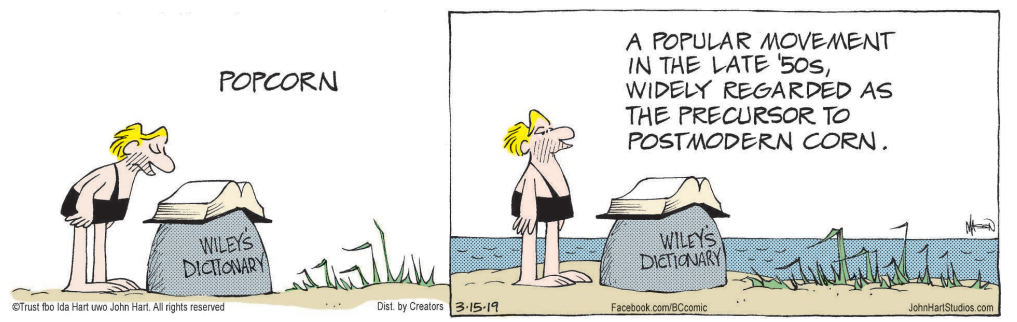
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