

Hostage to constant talkers

Dear Annie: How do you politely handle “the talkers”? There seem to be a lot of them out there — you know, friends, people you meet at gatherings, etc., who talk nonstop and hardly allow you the time to say anything. Conversation should be a two-way street, not a monologue, but they don’t seem to get it.

For example, someone will talk on and on about a trip he took or will take, and yes, that is interesting to me, but I’d like to mention my trip, too, and he never comes up for air. Whatever I might have to say is of no interest to these talkers. When they pause, I am able to actually get a sentence in, but after they hear it, they just continue on with their monologue without commenting.

All this listening on my part is exhausting. I feel like a captive audience. So now I just don’t socialize as much. I have told a friend she talks too much, but she just laughed, as if it were cute or something. But with a stranger or someone I don’t know well, what should I say? — *Tired Ears*

Dear Tired Ears: Any relationship or encounter we have with people should be a two-way street. If you leave feeling drained after having talked with a friend, then perhaps it’s time to find a new friend — especially if you have been upfront with your friend and your comments have landed on deaf ears.

Also, be aware of whether you are listening to the talkers’ stories. Much of the time, we don’t listen to the other person because we are waiting to speak ourselves — the very thing you are addressing in your letter.

With a stranger or someone you don’t know, you can always politely interrupt him or her and exit the situation.

Unfortunately, there could be a medical reason for why your chatterbox friend can’t stop. Compulsive talking could be a sign of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or anxiety. With that in mind, if the person is a really good friend, perhaps she is having a tough time and needs your friendship, but be firm in

insisting that for your friendship to continue, your conversations must include both of you.

Dear Annie: Your reply to “Hurt, Frustrated and Appalled in Florida,” the woman whose husband agreed to host his daughter’s wedding at their house, did address the lack of communication and issues with his children. However, reading between the lines, I think this woman is afraid of having all those strangers in her home. A few suggestions might ease her mind. Remove items that might easily get broken or are valuables to an off-limits bedroom. Remove all medication and personal items from the bathrooms.

She should remember that this is a small wedding, with 65 guests. Probably only close family and friends will be invited. A generous spirit in this wedding process will go a long way toward improving the family relationships. — *Tennessee Reader*

Dear Tennessee Reader: Thank you for sharing your helpful hints. You are correct that a generous spirit will go a long way, not only during this wedding process but during her entire lifetime.

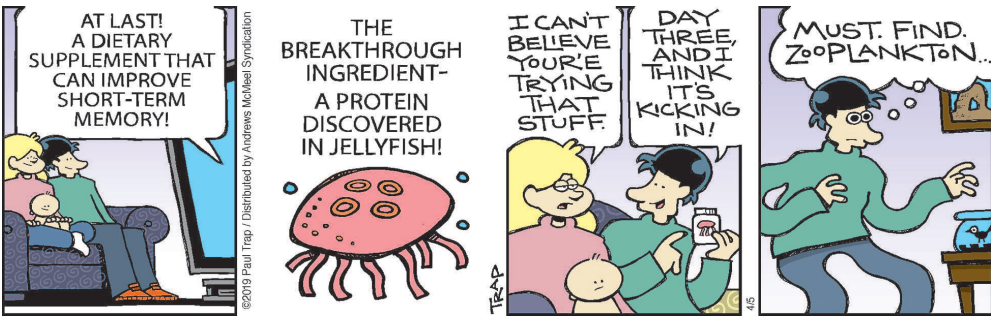


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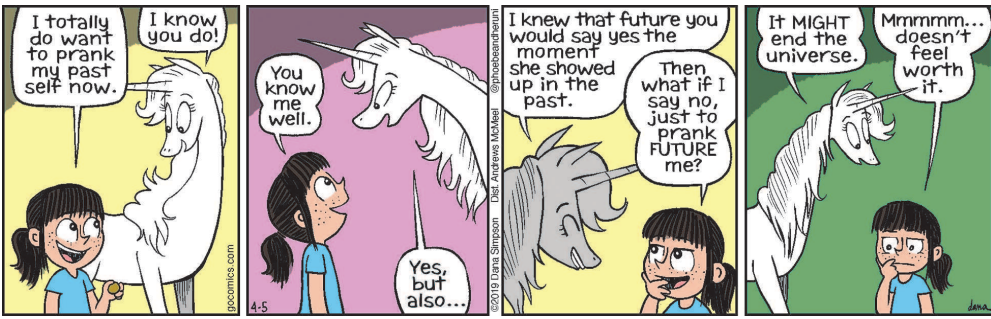
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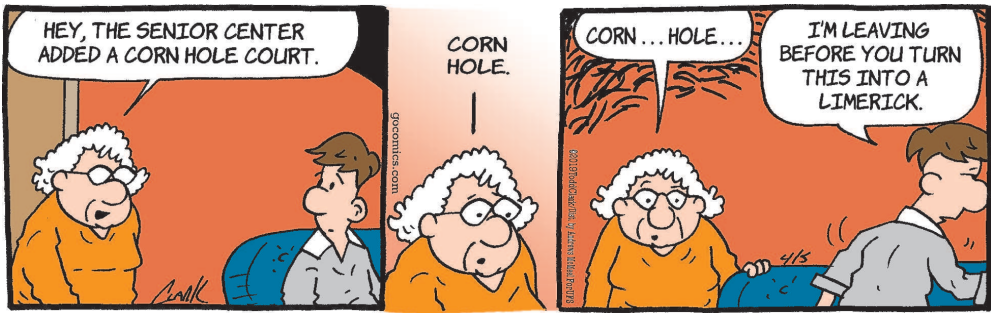
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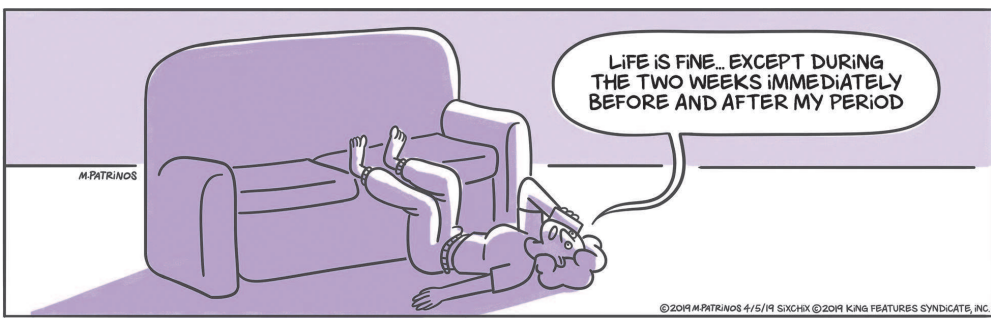
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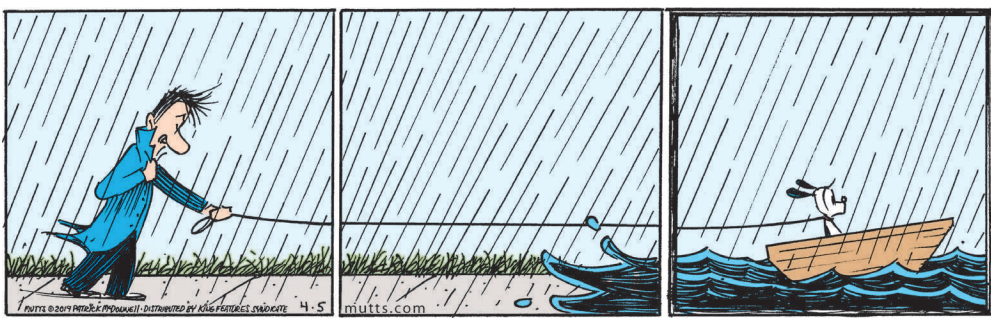
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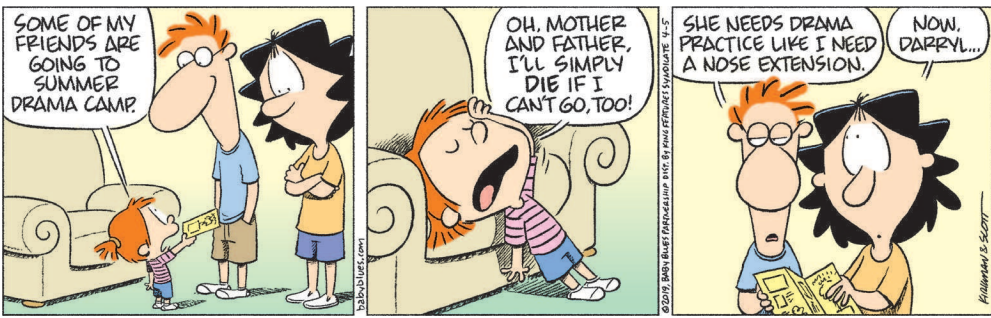
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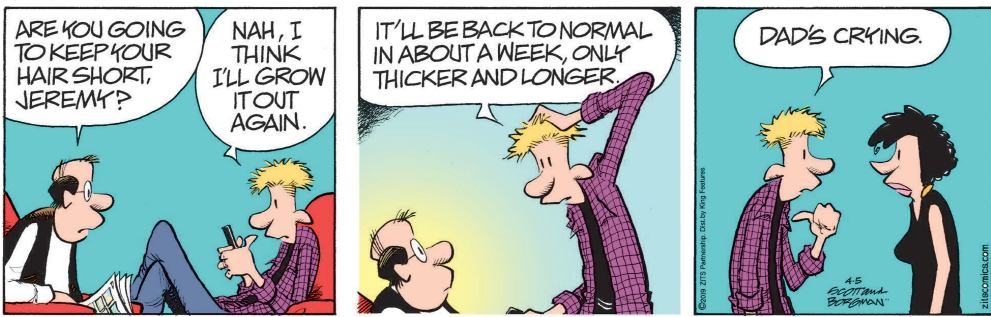
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BABY BLUES



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TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Balanced is not the same thing as equal. Strange things can balance out and often do. You can't argue with what works, nor is there any point in arguing with what doesn't.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're always making efforts to accommodate. Usually, life is better if you can swing it. But right now, it's just easier when everyone eats the same food and likes the same kind of entertainment.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You realize what's at stake for you, but in order to reach an agreement, you also have to know what's at stake for the other person. You'll reach agreement in at least three instances before the day is done.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Because you take business personally and treat people so well, you'll reap the benefits of a fulfilling atmosphere where you spend a good deal of your time.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It's fun to think about the future so long as you can avoid getting so caught up in planning and dreaming that you miss what's happening right now. What you have is extremely precious!

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There's comfort in knowing what you can expect. When you tell people what they are about to experience and then deliver on that, the reaction will be extremely favorable.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Take the high road. You don't have to take it out of benevolence. You can take it out of utility, just because it's the way most likely to solve the problem, and take the benevolence points as a bonus.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The time to set a goal for a conversation is before you have it. It may help to write down your goals and questions because it's a lot harder to recall this reasonable part of the brain when face to face.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There are so many wonderful things about your current position, most of them so common to you that you can't really see them. It's why the perspective of strangers is so valuable to you now.

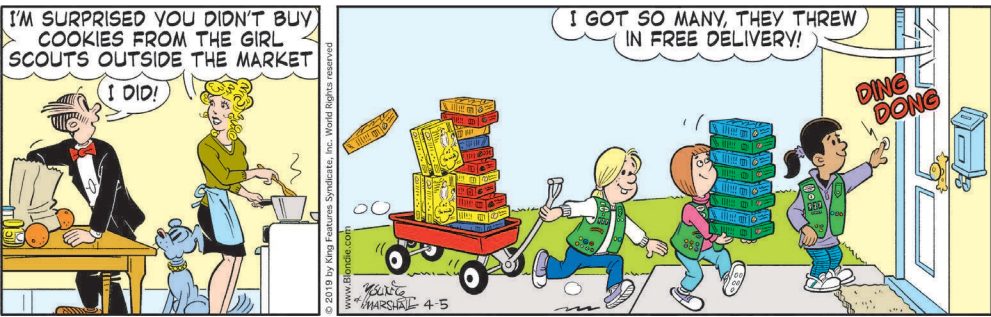
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You'll be evangelizing for a cause that will make the world better. Ignore the nonbelievers. You'll gain real numbers and momentum with those who are on the fence, just waiting to be convinced.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). All the kindergarten rules apply, and those much older will avoid all sorts of mayhem from applying the basics like "eyes on your own page" and "hands to yourself."

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Remember when you made that commitment when you really don't know much about it? Now you know. Future commitments are harder to make from this wizened position.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (April 6). The celebration of your birth won't be just a day. It will be ongoing, sporadic and surprising, the way the cosmic forces seem to gift you through this solar return. One of the gifts comes in the form of people who really get you and get behind what you do. Another is the environment that better supports you. Aquarius and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 30, 1, 19 and 10.

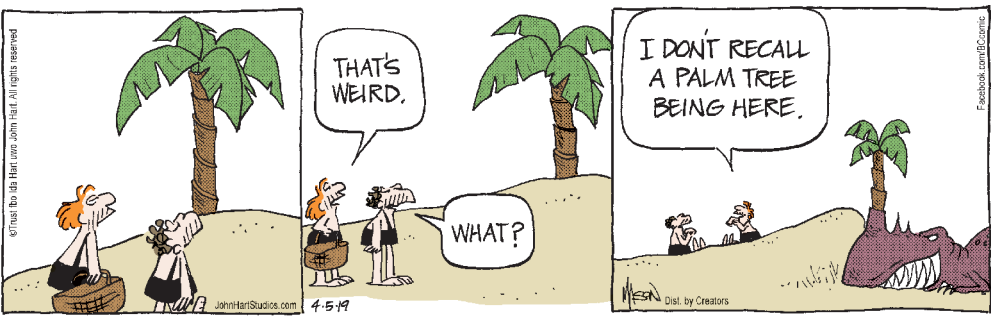
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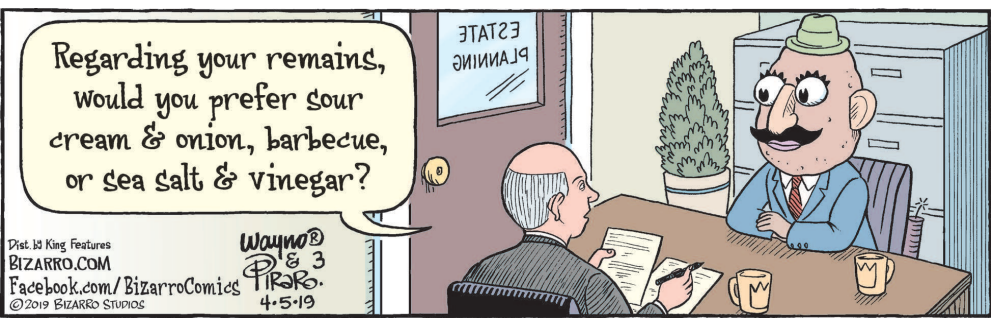
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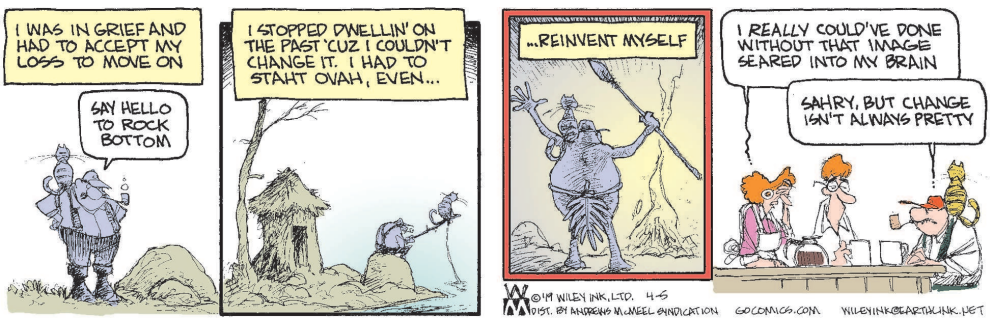
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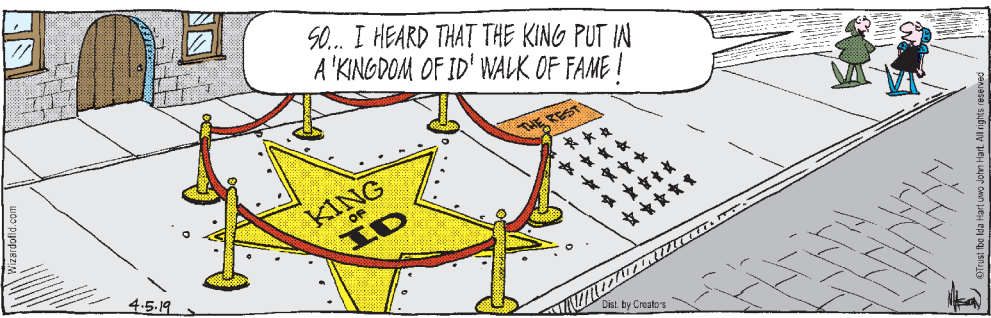
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