

Temporarily cutting ties

Dear Annie: I recently went no-contact with my father. We had a tumultuous relationship when I was growing up because of his struggle with mental illness. Before going no-contact with him, every phone call caused me intense anxiety and triggered symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. My decision to go no-contact was a long time coming, and I did not take it lightly. But I need this space from him for my mental well-being.

DEAR ANNIE



ANNIE LANE
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

He does not understand this. He thinks I'm taking a step backward, that I'm running away from the problem. I tried to explain to him how PTSD works, that events from years ago still haunt me because they were traumatic — and happened to an impressionable child. But now I feel like a villain, as if I'm in the wrong somehow. And he's still texting me regularly.

Is there any way to make him understand that I need space, that the mere thought

of seeing him or talking to him makes me panicky? I don't want to cut ties forever, but I need time and space. — *Blamed for Bedlam*

Dear Blamed: I applaud you for seeking out the space you need during this time. It's never ideal to have to cease contact with family members, but it is sometimes necessary.

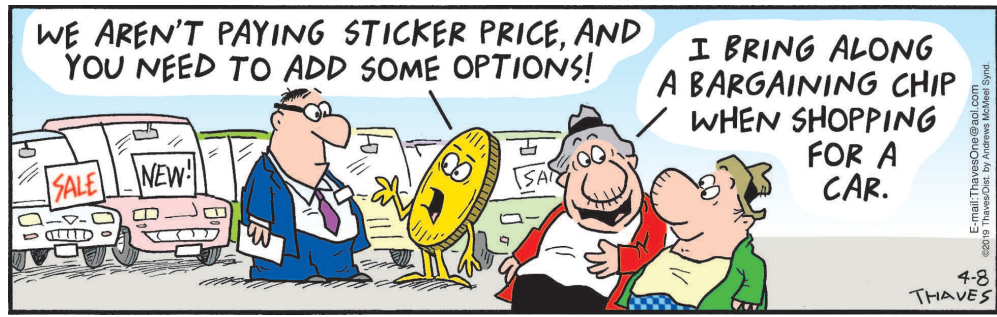
Your letter's last line — "I don't want to cut ties forever, but I need time and space" — says it all. Share that statement with your father. Know that he may not be in a healthy enough place to recognize and respect your boundaries. In that case, you might need to take more concrete steps toward asserting them — such as blocking his number temporarily so you're not barraged with stress-inducing texts and voice messages. Also, I hope that you're seeing a therapist. PTSD should not go without professional treatment.

Dear Annie: My 62-year-old live-in boyfriend of 13

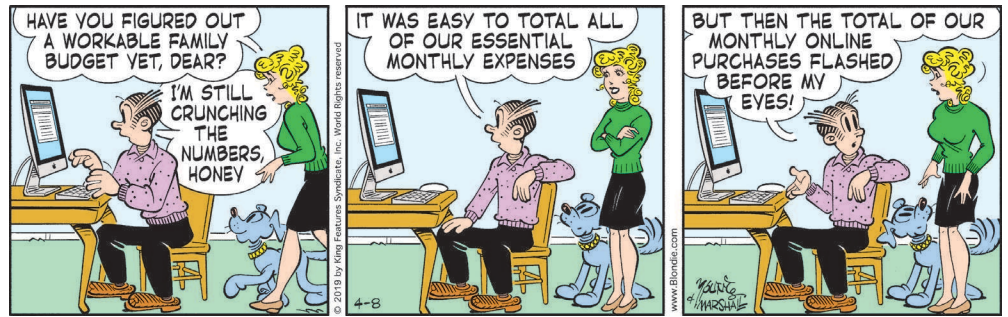
years hates it when my daughter comes to visit on the weekends. The whole time that she's here, he's in a horrible mood. He says it's "BS" that she comes to visit. She lives about an hour away. I love my daughter and will never tell her that she can't come home. She is 32. What can I do to make things better? — *Incredibly Frustrated*

Dear Incredibly Frustrated: Your boyfriend is way out of bounds, and that sort of trash talk is inappropriate and hurtful. That said, there are two sides to every story, and I'm attempting to imagine what his side might be here. Perhaps he's wanted to do something with you over the weekend. Or maybe he just feels obligated to play host to your daughter when in fact you'd be fine with him doing his own thing. The only way to solve this case is through conversation. Hear each other out, and try to come to a compromise that you both feel is fair. For example, your daughter might visit less frequently, or you might visit her some weekends instead.

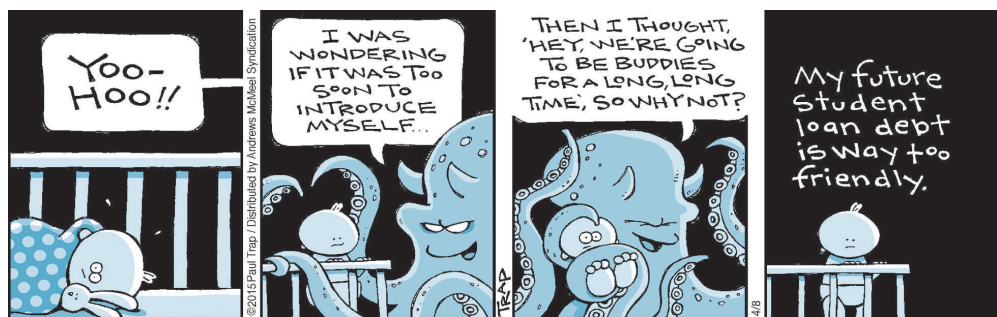
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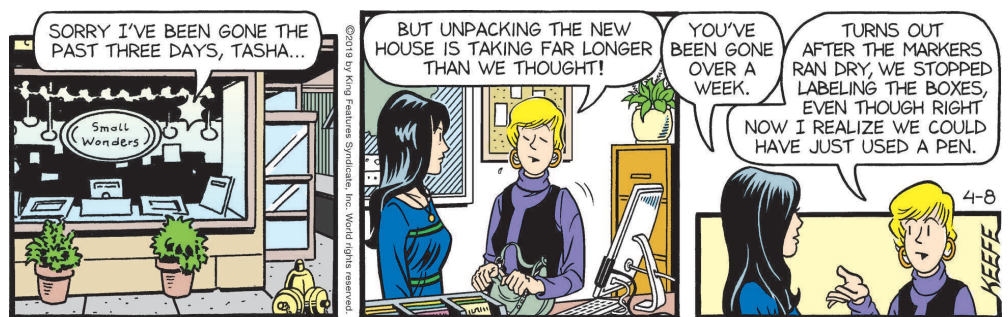
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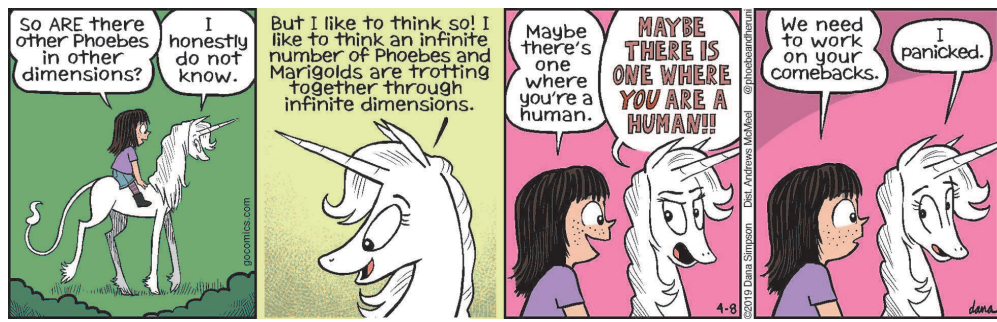
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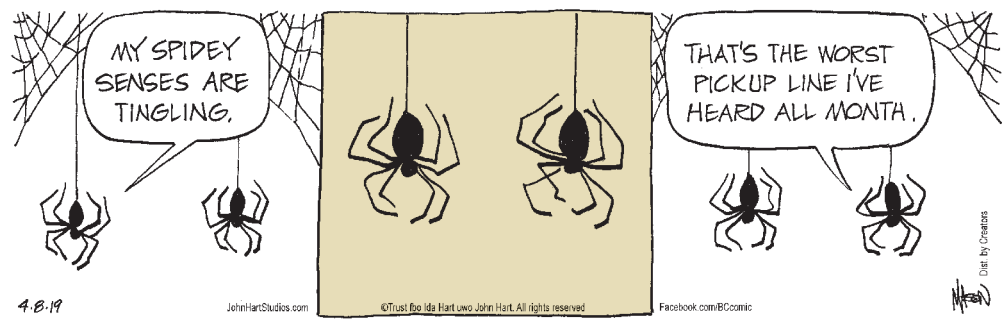
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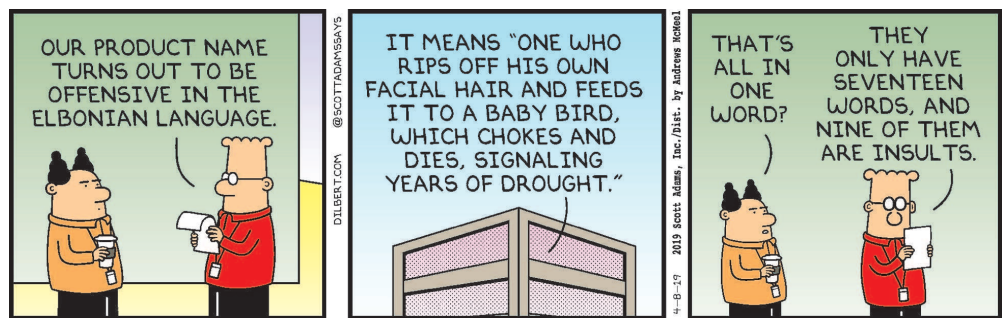
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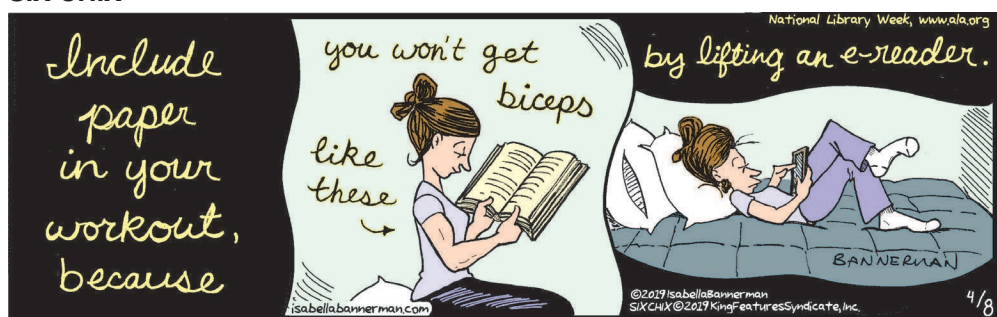
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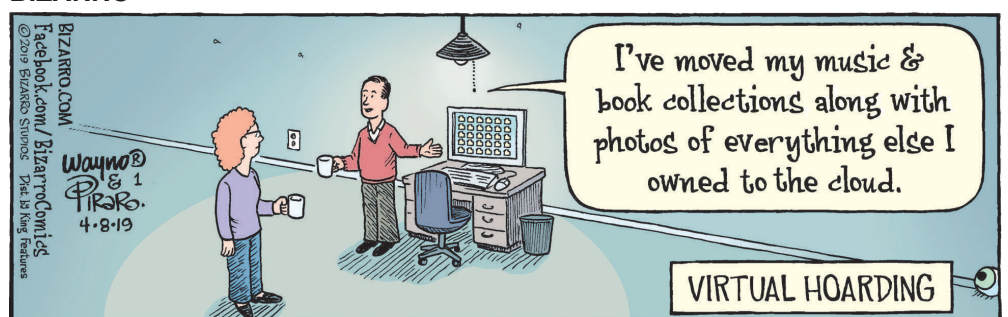
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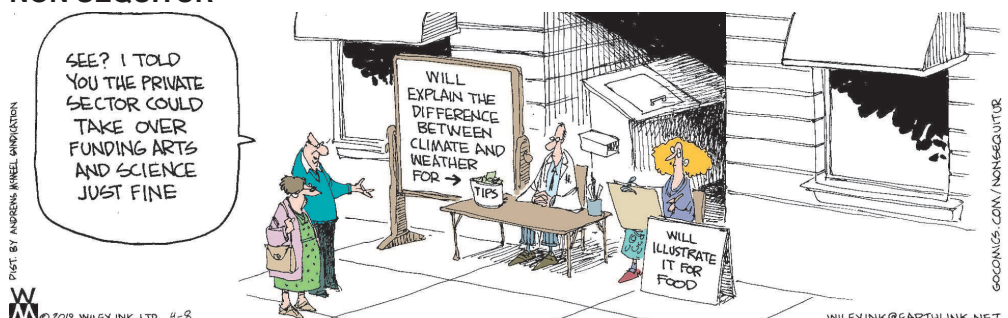
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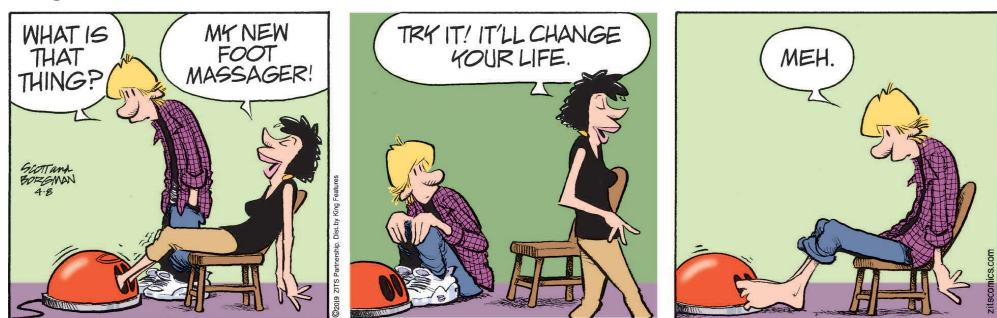
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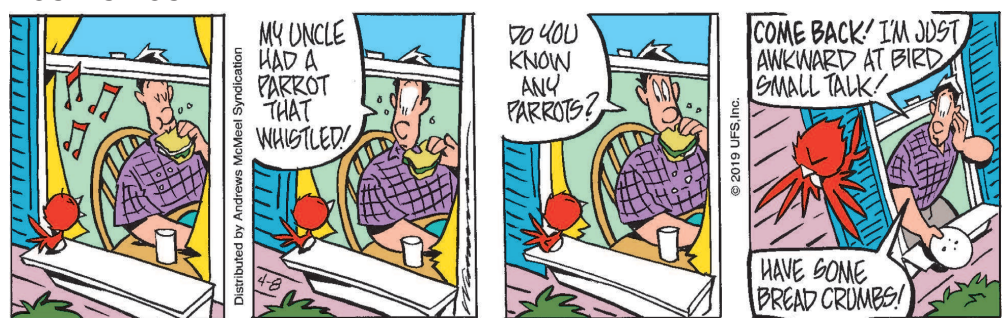
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ZITS



ROSE IS ROSE



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). It would be very easy to accidentally paint yourself into a corner today, and if you follow along, just doing the next thing and the next that occur to you, you'll wind up stuck. Make a plan before you start, and then stick to it.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Remind yourself how much you want to better people's lives before you start your work today, as whatever you have in front of your mind will change everything.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Life is improvisation. What's tossed your way will be nothing like you asked for or expected, but because you want the "scene" to go well, you'll accept whatever you're given and build on it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). If you go from glimpsing your own glory to avoiding mirrors for fear of locking eyes with ineptitude, then you're healthier than many. It's the ones who never doubt themselves you have to look out for. Take a breath. Believe.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You can recognize the value in a thing and still somehow know that it's not for you. It just doesn't feel right. It doesn't quicken your pulse or make you want to lean in. Trust those instincts. Say thank you. And move on.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You have excellent questions today and will get quick answers if you ask those questions properly, which is to say directly, simply and unemotionally.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The shamans say that stones, oceans and mountains are alive and communicating. Of course, things that are not human do not communicate in human voices. Interpretation is key in all things today. Put out your feelers.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Right now, you're

too close to the picture. You're getting the texture of brushstrokes without knowing what you're looking at. Step back. This can be most easily accomplished through actual physical distance. Take a trip.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The best things happen when you're listening, receptive, still inside and out. Feeling acknowledged, others show you their best and learn to trust you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). A very high-status person acting like a regular goof is charming. A low-status person goofing is annoying. Someone midrank behaving as expected is boring. Consider your place in the game and how to play it effectively.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). No one knows what to say. So you can relax and let yourself off the hook for whatever you did say, reflexively, accidentally, clumsily, frustratedly. ... It got out, and now you can learn from it or just forget about it. Your choice.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). This day is a sequence of seemingly unrelated events, but you'll see a thread through them and extrapolate a meaning that's personal to you. You're the true artist, making very specific choices from the varied palette of life.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (April 9). You'll take care of business, the first business being your own personal fulfillment. Making pleasure a priority isn't always hedonistic. This year, figuring out what delights your senses will lead you down a path of greater health and contribution. What you learn in June helps you sock money away for an adventure. Leo and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 40, 3, 33 and 18.