

DEAR ABBY

Write to Dear Abby online at dearabby.com or by mail at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069



Dear Abby: There is a woman where I work who is emotionally needy. My work is autonomous, but we are in the same group, so I have to interact with her to some extent.

Early on, I made the mistake of offering her emotional support, thinking she was going through something temporary and her life would get better. This is not the case. Her life is an anxiety-ridden train wreck. She doesn't think she needs to see a therapist, which, I guess, makes sense since I have been performing that role.

Our conversations begin with her asking how I'm doing, then 30 seconds later turn into a monologue of whatever her current drama happens to be. I need things to be copacetic with this woman, and I have no idea how to pull away from these interactions that leave me overwhelmed and emotionally drained.

I'd like to tell her what the problem is. I have gently suggested how to look at herself in a situation or how she can do things differently. She's not inclined to hear anything she doesn't agree with. She only wants to complain and dump her emotional garbage on me.

She's now asking me if she has done something to upset me, as I have become increasingly distant since we began working from home. Should I tell her what my problem is or leave it until we go back to the office and refuse to interact with her unless it's work-related?

— Reached the Limit in California

Dear Reached: Tell your co-worker that as much as you like her, the reason you seem more distant is her personal problems have become more than you can handle hearing about. Explain further that you are not qualified to advise her, and even though she doesn't want to see a licensed mental health professional, you feel she would benefit from it. It's the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Dear Abby: A longtime friend and I have always exchanged birthday cards. For years, we would try to "one-up" each other with funny cards or sometimes sweet ones. I have always spent a lot of time in card stores choosing just the right one for her.

For the last four or five years, my friend has sent me the SAME card, one which obviously is taken from a box of cards. They are so old that the paper has yellowed and the message is generic and impersonal.

It's obvious that she does not care enough to give my birthday any thought and, frankly, it's tacky. It aggravates me so much that I'd rather not receive a card from her. I rarely see or talk to her anymore. Am I being petty to let this bother me as much as it does?

— Pretty Mad in Kentucky

Dear Pretty Mad: Before making more negative judgments about your old friend, make an effort to find out why her pattern of behavior changed so radically over the last four or five years. Is she having financial or health problems? That she RE-MEMBERS your birthday — regardless of how humbly — should count in her favor. The two of you are long overdue for an honest conversation to catch up with each other.

YOUR HOROSCOPE By Madalyn Aslan

Stars show the kind of day you'll have

★★★★★ DYNAMIC | ★★★★★ POSITIVE | ★★★ AVERAGE | ★★ SO-SO | ★ DIFFICULT

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 2021: Original, insistent and inventive, your approach to life is filled with constant activity. This year, you will be successful through sheer force of will. You reaffirm your confidence and will make an impression on those who matter. Financial rewards will provide security and allay doubts and fears. If single, don't be afraid to make the first move. If attached, discover more activities you love doing together. VIRGO pampers you.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★ Get the ball rolling with plans for a family reunion. Arrange a Zoom call with relatives to brainstorm about the arrangements. You yearn to spend more time with people who know you like a book. Tonight: Prepare your weekly schedule.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★ Take your time reading the Sunday paper and watching news shows. Go for a walk on a path you don't usually follow. Chat with neighbors with whom you have more in common than you think. Tonight: Yoga and relaxation exercises.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ You made a professional breakthrough for which you didn't receive credit. Reward yourself. Buy something a bit indulgent for yourself that is not too pricey. Ask a friend for suggestions and shop online together. Tonight: Continue a serious conversation.

CANCER (June 21-July 21)

★★★ Use your winning smile to get the attention of someone you admire. Stand by a decision you made even if it goes against what others think. Turn on the charm, and others will see things your way. Tonight: Accept an invitation.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Your vibrant personality often belies your need for peace and quietude. Claim a bit of time today to meditate or ponder a problem that's been playing out in your mind. An old memory brings a smile. Tonight: Listen to old stories.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Your desire to make the world a better place will guide you today. When you think about what is best for everyone involved, you perform a noble service to your community. A friendship arises from common goals. Tonight: Pass on information.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★ Enthusiasm for your work could cause you to lose track of time. Family and friends will alert you when you need to come up for air. Delegate responsibilities and you'll get things accomplished and smell the roses. Tonight: Talk things over.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Use all your brain power today. Try your best to explain a complex set of ideas in simple terms. You'll arouse curiosity and cultivate the desire to learn more. Move around more to escape over-thinking things. Tonight: Taste something exotic.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Take the time to really listen to someone who wants your opinion. You might not think you have a solution, but something you say could resonate and provide someone with exactly what's needed. Your smile melts hearts. Tonight: Play loud music.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★ Look for people who make life easier. A home improvement whiz or a sharp assistant will take excess burdens off your shoulders. It's a good day to call on someone you consider to be your best friend. Tonight: Children's hour.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Organize your space so you spend less time searching for items you need at a moment's notice. Don't be stubborn. Let people you love offer advice and help you get started. Exercise outdoors and you'll feel fabulous. Tonight: Stay up late.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Let your imagination run wild today, and you could stumble upon the solution to a long-term problem. When your creative juices begin to flow, magic happens. Share a funny story with a child or grandchild. Giggle freely. Tonight: Practice a speech.

Gardening corner

Best plants for Central Oregon are native

BY LIZ DOUVILLE

For The Bulletin

Every year for the past 20 plus years, I start watching my forsythia bush for fattening buds. Then I look over to the emerging daffodils. Why? I need to have the visual that phenology is still in place and the world hasn't gone "to heck in a handbasket" over the winter.

Phenology is the study of the cyclic relationship between climate, plant and animal life. In the case of the forsythia/daffodil relationship it has been the same time clock over the years. First, the forsythia blooms followed by the daffodils blooming within two weeks.

In the mid-west, the old-time farmers watched for "when the oak leaves are the size of a squirrel's ear," as the indicator to sow their corn. Another was "when apple trees shed their petals it is time to sow corn." With soil science information becoming more available to the home gardener, we have learned that proper soil temperature is what drives seed germination. Some seeds do germinate at soil temperatures of 45 to 50 degrees. However, the crops most gardeners want in their summer vegetable garden: tomatoes, corn, cukes, beans, require the optimum soil temperature of 75 degrees for in-ground seed planting. The moral of the story: If you



Forsythia shrubs grow well in Central Oregon. 123RF

want success, buy a soil thermometer.

Now that I am assured spring gardening in Central Oregon is on its normal path, I will continue on with my yearly shopping list of perennials. That's the list that usually starts in the middle of winter when you are suffering from insomnia and you get out of bed and look at a nursery catalog. By the time April arrives, the wants and desires list is extensive and needs to drastically be cut back. That's hard to do when you want it all.

The sensible and economical process is to think about and make a list of what your criteria are for your landscaping plants. I have the "friendly five" deer that visit almost daily. Needless to say, I look for deer resistance knowing full well they will probably nibble, especially the young ones, but won't have a feast. Also high on my list is a

low-water requirement. These two criteria limit the choices somewhat but it does make the best use of my landscaping budget.

The selections increase when I refer and sort through the native plants for Central Oregon that are available and will meet my desire for color and texture.

Desert sweet, chamaebatiar mellefolium, a deciduous shrub listed on the Native Plant Central Oregon list is one that I am planning on adding this year.

Desert sweet is also known as fernbush for its fern-like leaf appearance. The small shrub produces white flowers that are sweetly aromatic. In addition to the aromatic flowers, the leaves have a sticky quality which is also a deer deterrent feature.

The preferred growing condition for the irregular, unkept-looking shrub is in full

sun. Desert Sweet is listed in the OSU publication "Water-wise Gardening in Central Oregon," EM 9136.

I will also be looking for agastache berberi or hummingbird mint, which is considered to be a magnet for butterflies and hummingbirds. This group has many common names. Hummingbird mint and anise hyssop are two of the more hardy varieties. I have 'golden jubilee' anise hyssop, which has overwintered in a planter for at least five years.

Salvias are also on my list for their pollinator quality and attraction for bees. The varieties are cold hardy, deer resistant, and listed on the water-wise plant list. With the exception of 'east friesland' most varieties will not reseed. The plant benefits by deadheading to encourage a second bloom.

The air temperatures may be going the full range of unpredictable spring weather but plant growth is happening. Every day I discover something new has popped out of the soil. The alliums are showing strong growth which reminds me to add more bulbs to the fall shopping list. The lists never end.

Resources: Selecting native plants for home landscapes in Central Oregon, <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/ec1623>.

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