

DEAR ABBY

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



Dear Abby: Over the weekend, while I was cleaning and reorganizing our bedroom, I found the engagement ring my boyfriend plans on proposing to me with. I didn't know he was planning this, and I'm thrilled that he is going to. I haven't even hinted that I know anything is going on because I don't want to ruin the surprise more than I already have.

My problem is, I hate the ring he chose. It's beautiful, but it's so big. I like dainty jewelry, and it is the complete opposite of anything I would ever choose for myself. What do I do? I love this man with my whole heart. He's my best friend, and we have been there for each other through the lowest of lows and the highest of highs. We have great communication and always keep things completely honest between us. I suppose I should suck it up. He chose this ring for me, and I don't want to hurt his feelings. Please tell me what to do.

— *Disappointed in Illinois*

Dear Disappointed: Congratulations on your upcoming engagement. Your problem is unique because most of the letters I receive about engagement rings come from women who are disappointed that the stone is so small. However, if the size of the stone in the ring your boyfriend is giving you makes you uncomfortable, your response — after an enthusiastic “YES!!!” — could be, “But, darling, this stone is so large we will have to hire an armed guard to accompany me if I wear it outside the house. Are you sure it's WISE for me to wear this every day? I would be very happy with something more modest, you know.” (It's worth a try.)

Dear Abby: I have always been too kind and polite. I give money I shouldn't, say yes to favors I don't want to do and keep my mouth shut in situations where I should speak up. My best friend once told me I shouldn't say what she needed to hear, but only what she wanted to hear.

I have been in therapy for two years now, and we finally reached the point where I'm learning to say no. I love that when I meet strangers, I can use the skills I'm learning and be more assertive.

My friends and family are having a hard time with it. I broke up with the bestie because our relationship had been long, toxic and abusive. Other people seem shocked if I say no or voice an opinion. They proceed to pressure me to change my mind, which makes me transform back into a mouse and comply so I won't seem rude. How can I get them to understand that I am changing for the better, which includes putting myself, my needs and my decisions between yes and no first?

— *Looking Out for Number One*

Dear Looking Out: You and your therapist appear to have been doing some good work. Of course people who hear you say no or state your honest opinion are having trouble with it. That's not the person you WERE. You are becoming a new person, someone with whom they are not used to dealing. Keep in mind that when someone asks you to do something you would rather not do, you ALWAYS have the right to refuse. And when you are pressured to change your opinion, what you should say is, “Intelligent minds can differ,” or, “I'm entitled to my opinion.” It's the truth.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Oct. 21, the 294th day of 2021. There are 71 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

In **1966**, 144 people, 116 of them children, were killed when a coal waste landslide engulfed a school and some 20 houses in Aberfan, Wales.

In **1797**, the U.S. Navy frigate *Constitution*, also known as “Old Ironsides,” was christened in Boston's harbor.

In **1805**, a British fleet commanded by Adm. Horatio Nelson defeated a French-Spanish fleet in the Battle of Trafalgar; Nelson, however, was killed.

In **1879**, Thomas Edison perfected a workable electric light at his laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey.

In **1944**, during World War II, U.S. troops captured the German city of Aachen.

In **1945**, women in France were allowed to vote in parliamentary elections for the first time.

In **1967**, the Israeli destroyer *INS Eilat* was sunk by Egyptian missile boats near Port Said; 47 Israeli crew members were lost. Tens of thousands of Vietnam War protesters began two days of demonstrations in Washington, D.C.

In **1969**, beat poet and author Jack Kerouac died in St. Petersburg, Florida, at age 47.

In **1971**, President Richard Nixon nominated Lewis F. Powell and William H. Rehnquist to the U.S. Supreme Court. (Both nominees were confirmed.)

In **2001**, Washington, D.C., postal worker Thomas L. Morris Jr. died of inhalation anthrax as officials began testing thousands of postal employees.

In **2012**, former senator and 1972 Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern, 90, died in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

In **2014**, North Korea abruptly freed Jeffrey Fowle, an American, nearly six months after he was arrested for leaving a Bible in a nightclub. Former Washington Post executive editor Ben Bradlee, 93, died in Washington.

In **2015**, Vice President Joe Biden announced he would not be a candidate in the 2016 White House campaign, solidifying Hillary Rodham Clinton's status as the Democratic front-runner.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama declared that America's long and deeply unpopular war in Iraq would be over by the end of 2011 and that all U.S. troops “will definitely be home for the holidays.”

Five years ago: Cyberattacks on server farms of a key internet firm repeatedly disrupted access to major websites and online services including Twitter, Netflix and PayPal across the United States.

One year ago: Republican Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah, the party's 2012 presidential nominee, told CNN that he had voted in the Nov. 3 election, but not for Donald Trump. Former President Barack Obama made his first in-person campaign pitch for Joe Biden, urging voters in Philadelphia, especially Black men, not to sit out the election and risk seeing Trump reelected. Spain became the first western European country to reach more than 1 million confirmed coronavirus cases. The Justice Department said drugmaker Purdue Pharma, the company behind the powerful prescription painkiller OxyContin that experts said had helped touch off an opioid epidemic, would plead guilty to federal criminal charges as part of a settlement of more than \$8 billion. At least 10 bodies were found in an unmarked mass grave in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where investigators were searching for the remains of victims of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Joyce Randolph is 97. Rock singer Manfred Mann is 81. Musician Steve Cropper (Booker T. & the MG's) is 80. Singer Elvin Bishop is 79. TV's Judge Judy Sheindlin is 79. Actor Everett McGill is 76. Musician Lee Loughnane (Chicago) is 75. Actor Dick Christie is 73. Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is 72. Actor LaTanya Richardson Jackson is 72. Musician Charlotte Caffey (The Go-Go's) is 68. Movie director Catherine Hardwicke is 66. Singer Julian Cope is 64. Rock musician Steve Lukather (Toto) is 64. Actor Ken Watanabe is 62. Actor Melora Walters is 62. Rock singer-musician Nick Oliveri (Mondo Generator) is 50. Christian rock musician Charlie Lowell (Jars of Clay) is 48. Actor Jeremy Miller is 45. Country singer Matthew Ramsey (Old Dominion) is 44. Actor Will Estes is 43. Actor Michael McMillian is 43. Reality TV star Kim Kardashian West is 41. Actor Matt Dallas is 39. Actor Charlotte Sullivan is 38. Actor Aaron Tveit is 38. Actor Glenn Powell is 33. Country singer Kane Brown is 28.

NFL

League agrees to end race-based brain testing in \$1B settlement

BY MARYCLAIRE DALE

Associated Press
PHILADELPHIA — The NFL agreed to end race-based adjustments in dementia testing that critics said made it difficult for Black retirees to qualify for awards in the \$1 billion settlement of concussion claims, according to a proposed deal filed Wednesday in federal court.

The revised testing plan follows public outrage over the use of “race-norming,” a practice that came to light only after two former NFL players filed a civil rights lawsuit over it in 2019. The adjustments, critics say, may have prevented hundreds of Black players suffering from dementia to win awards that average \$500,000 or more.

The Black retirees will now have the chance to have their tests rescored or, in some cases, seek a new round of cognitive testing, according to the settlement, details of which were first reported in *The New York Times* on Wednesday.

“No race norms or race demographic estimates — whether Black or white — shall be used in the settlement program going forward,” the settlement said.

The proposal, which must still be approved by a judge, follows months of closed-door negotiations between the NFL, class counsel for retired players, and lawyers for the Black players who filed suit, Najeh Davenport and Kevin Henry.

The vast majority of the league's players — 70% of active players and more than 60% of living retirees — are Black. So the changes are expected to be significant, and potentially costly for the NFL.

To date, the fund has paid out \$821 million for five types of brain injuries, including early and advanced dementia, Parkinson's disease and Lou Gehrig's disease, also known



Matt Rourke/AP file

Former NFL players Ken Jenkins, right, and Clarence Vaughn III, center right, along with their wives, Amy Lewis, center, and Brooke Vaughn, left, carry petitions demanding equal treatment for everyone involved in the settlement of concussion claims against the NFL to the federal courthouse in Philadelphia in May.

as ALS.

Lawyers for the Black players suspect that white men were qualifying for awards at two or three times the rate of Blacks. Black NFL retiree Ken Jenkins and others have asked the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department to open an inquiry. The first payouts were awarded in 2017. The fund, now uncapped, is intended to last for 65 years, to cover anyone retired at the time it was first approved.

To date, about 2,000 men have applied for dementia awards, but only 30% have been approved. In some cases, the NFL appealed payouts awarded to Black men if doctors did not apply the racial adjustment. The new plan would forbid any challenges based on race.

The NFL would admit no wrongdoing under terms of the new settlement.

The league had agreed in June, amid the uproar, to halt the use of race-norming, which assumes Black players start with lower cognitive function. That makes it harder to show they suffer from a mental deficit linked to their playing days. More than 20,000 NFL retir-

ees or relatives have registered for the settlement program, which offers monitoring, testing and, for some, compensation. The awards average \$715,000 for those with advanced dementia and \$523,000 for those with early dementia.

“If the new process eliminates race-norming and more people qualify, that's great,” said Jenkins, who does not have an impairment but advocates for those who do.

“(But) we're not going to get everything we wanted,” Jenkins, an insurance executive, said Tuesday. “We want full transparency of all the demographic information from the NFL — who's applied, who's been paid.”

Senior U.S. District Judge Anita B. Brody, who has overseen the settlement for a decade, dismissed the suit filed by Davenport and Henry this year on procedural grounds. But she later ordered the lawyers who negotiated the 2013 settlement to work with a mediator to address it. Copyright 2021 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

YOUR HOROSCOPE

By Georgia Nicols

Stars show the kind of day you'll have

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

MOON ALERT: There are no restrictions to shopping or important decisions today. The Moon is in Taurus.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR THURSDAY, OCT. 21, 2021: You have a wide emotional range because you are a sensitive person. You are capable of passion and subtlety. You are charming, intelligent and capable of inspiring others. This is the last year of a nine-year cycle for you, which means you will be wrapping up things that need to be finished to make room for new beginnings next year.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ There's tough energy in the air today. For some, it will trigger arguments and disputes with partners, close friends and authority figures. However, you also can use this same feisty energy to get things done — a wiser and more productive choice. Tonight: Patience.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★ Disputes about politics, religion or racial issues might easily arise today. Don't even go there. This is a waste of energy. Instead, use this same energy to be productive at work. You also can use this energy to work out and get physical exercise. Your choice. Tonight: Choose.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ Parents must be patient with their kids today to avoid confrontations. Likewise, romantic partners need to be patient with each other to avoid nasty arguments. Meanwhile, this same energy to fight can be channeled in a different way and used in sports or creative ways. Tonight: Be smart.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Family conflicts and domestic arguments might take place today. However, you have a choice. Instead, you can use this same energy to move furniture around and make improvements at home, especially improvements that require physical energy. This choice is a no-brainer. Tonight: Relax.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Today you are high-viz, which is why people might know personal details about your private life. (Like, what's with that?) This might put you on edge, which, in turn, could trigger arguments. Do not say something you will regret later. Tonight: Keep busy.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Money disputes are likely today, or perhaps disputes about something that you own. To put a positive spin on this, look for ways to improve what you already own. You might see new uses and applications for it. (Could that rusty barbecue be a shabby chic floor lamp?) Tonight: Get creative.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Right now, the Sun, retrograde Mercury and fiery Mars are all in your sign, which totally hypes your energy! You can use this energy to argue with others, or you can use this energy to improve something, especially your own body or your appearance. Tonight: Get pumped!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★ You might feel rankled or suspicious about something going on behind the scenes. Don't let this get you down. You are excellent at dealing with hidden agendas. (“Secrets” is my middle name.) Be investigative and resist the urge to retaliate against someone. Tonight: Easy does it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ This is a popular time for you, especially because you might be involved with younger people or people you haven't seen in a while — people from your past. You're very good at keeping your trapline fresh, because you know how to stay in touch with others. Tonight: Avoid arguments.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ People admire you now; meanwhile, some of you are involved with parents or bosses you haven't seen in a while. This could be an opportunity for some serious catching up. Resist the urge to defy authority, be rebellious or challenge someone today. It's not worth it. Tonight: Be mellow.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★ You might be involved in feisty discussions about politics, religion or racial or social issues today. They could be nasty. It's impossible to fight prejudice, because prejudice was never based on logical facts in the first place. Avoid these disputes. Tonight: Enjoy discussions with creative pals.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ You might be at odds with someone today about shared property, inheritances, insurance issues or something to do with debt or what you hold jointly with someone else. This could involve shared responsibilities. Don't waste today fighting. Use this energy to find a win-win solution. Tonight: Peace.

NBA

Continued from A5

“They could look at someone who had broken a barrier, who had disproven the mythologies around white supremacy.”

But it was a gradual climb to the Celtics dynasty that began just before the decade ended. Cousy was the floor leader of those squads, though when he finished college in 1950, he believed he could make more money by touring New England for exhibition games with his Holy Cross teammates than playing real ones in the NBA.

“There was no interest whatsoever. We were behind baseball, football, hockey and then came basketball in the '50s,” Cousy said. “Unless you had the Globetrotters as a double-header-type thing. Then you'd sell out.”

Or maybe if George Mikan was in town. The NBA's first superstar centered its first dynasty, the Minneapolis Lakers. His teams won five titles in six years from 1949-54, but almost

all the attention went to the 6-foot-10 Mikan, who wearing his glasses looked more professor than post player.

Mikan ended up in Minneapolis after his previous team folded and he went to the Lakers in a lottery. That's the same way Cousy became a Celtic.

An 11-team league when the 1950-51 season began was reduced to 10 by the time it ended, after the Washington Capitols — coached in the late 1940s by future Celtics leader Red Auerbach — disbanded during it.

It was down to nine in time for 1953-54, when the West Division consisted of just four teams and none was anywhere near the West. It was Milwaukee; Indianapolis; Fort Wayne, Indiana; and Rochester, which is only West in New York State.

Cousy wasn't convinced of the league's future in 1950. He and a teammate had started a business of driving lessons for women and were planning to open a string of gas stations when he was drafted in the first

round by the Tri-Cities Blackhaws.

“I said, ‘Well, I was a pretty good student in school. I must have been asleep in geography class. What the hell is a Tri-City?’” Cousy remembered thinking.

It was the team representing Moline, Illinois, Rock Island, Illinois, and Davenport, Iowa. The franchise traded Cousy to the Chicago Stags rather than pay him the \$10,000 a year he sought. He never played there either, after they folded.

Cousy became a Celtic in time for the 1950-51 season, also Cooper's first season. Though Cooper was the first Black drafted in the NBA, Earl Lloyd was the first to play in a game that season. And Nat “Sweetwater” Clifton of the Knicks was the first Black player to sign a contract.

“I'm very proud to have at least helped light the flame,” Cousy said, “helped set the table for what I have seen happening to the sport in my lifetime.”

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The Bulletin

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