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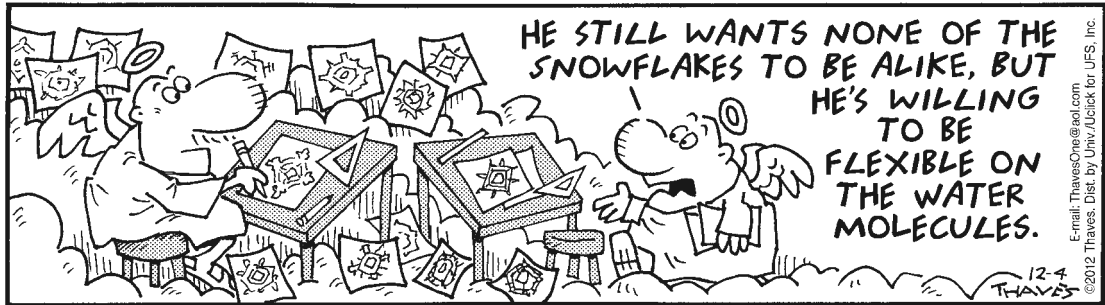
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“How come the only kid Baby Jesus got to have at his birthday party was that little drummer boy?”

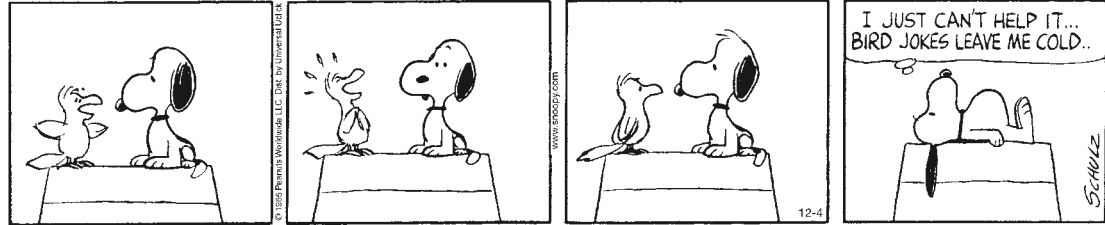
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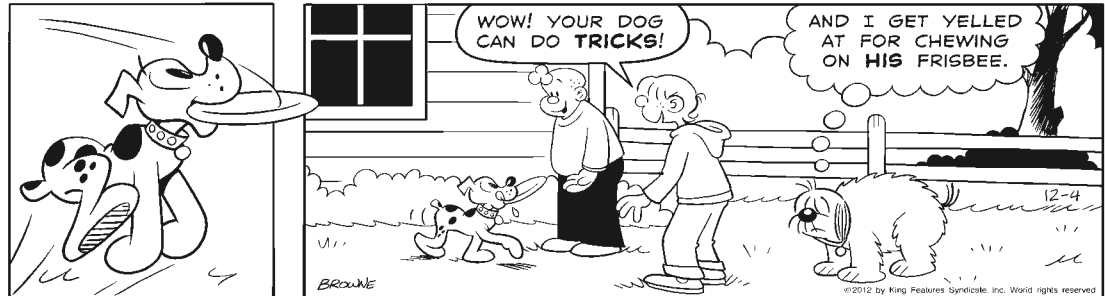
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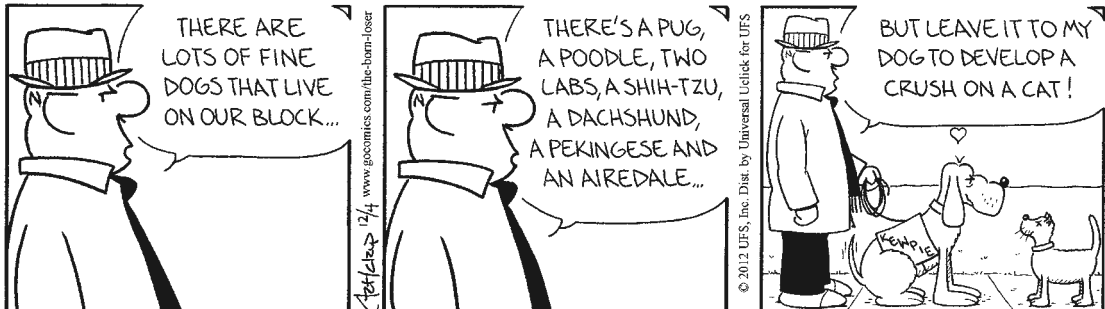
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Troubled Woman Needs Expert Advice Friends Can't Provide

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I have a friend, "Cara," who lives in another state. It's not a very reciprocal friendship. Cara calls us frequently, but wants to talk only about her problems, which are never-ending. When she visits, she demands our full attention at all times. Frankly, we find her exhausting and would like to cut her out of our lives.

Our worry is that we are some of the few friends Cara has left. She has alienated most of her other friends as well as her parents, sometimes over trivial matters. We know she's depressed and has emotional issues, and we suspect she may have a mental illness. She has been suicidal in the past, but now refuses to see her therapist.

We're worried that if we don't continue serving as her talk therapy — which we find draining — Cara might become so depressed she'll hurt herself. How do we extricate ourselves from this relationship while still doing the right thing? — WORN-OUT BUT WORRIED IN CHICAGO

DEAR WORN-OUT: You and your wife are well-meaning, but neither of you is qualified to be Cara's therapist. Allowing her to monopolize your time and sap your energy may momentarily lessen her pain or anxiety, but it hasn't — and will not — give her the tools she needs to fix what's wrong.

You can extricate yourselves by encouraging her to talk to a mental health professional. It doesn't have to be the therapist she no longer wants to see, but it does need to be someone who has the training to help her. You should also shorten the length of the conversations. This is happening to you because you are allowing it.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I are retired and

enjoy going out for a nice dinner occasionally. We go to chain restaurants, hotel restaurants and local dinner establishments. We order lighter meals than we used to, and with the cost of dinners these days we have been finishing our entire meal.

Our problem is that again and again, our server makes a comment about our finished plates. It might be, "You were really hungry, I see!" or, "Wow! You really enjoyed that!" It is uncomfortable to hear these comments about our eating habits and it spoils our enjoyment.

This may be an attempt on their part to be friendly, but we don't like it. How do we let them know this is crossing the boundaries of professional behavior? — EMBARRASSED IN CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA.

DEAR EMBARRASSED: I hope you realize that for many people this would not be a problem. You needn't be confrontational — all you need to calmly say is, "When you say that, it makes me uncomfortable, so please don't do it again." No servers want to offend a guest, and they are not mind readers. However, they are all aware that their tips depend on how their service is regarded by customers — so I'm sure your comment will be taken to heart.

DEAR ABBY: Is it possible for a man to be in love with two women at the same time? — NAME WITHHELD IN VIRGINIA

DEAR NAME WITHHELD: Yes, I think so — and it is usually for different reasons. The same holds true for women. However, for a lasting relationship, people have to choose the one partner who has more of the qualities they think are most important.

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JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bigar's Stars is based on the degree of your sun at birth. The sign name is simply a label astrologers put on a set of degrees for convenience. For best results, readers should refer to the dates following each sign.

A baby born today has a Sun in Sagittarius and a Moon in Leo.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR TUESDAY, DEC. 4, 2012:

Extremes mark your year. Sometimes you go way overboard enjoying yourself. You also become very demonstrative and expressive. If you are single, hold back a little, as a new person might not understand where you are coming from. If you are attached, your loved one could be taken aback by this change. This person initially might be oversensitive, but after he or she makes an adjustment, a great time will be had by all. Excessive communication seems to be happening all around you. Try to avoid misunderstandings by confirming what you hear and also by clarifying anything that does not make sense. LEO is as expressive as you are. The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19)

Express more of your feelings. Someone could respond with total confusion. You might not understand what eludes this person. Consider that it might just be that this person does not know how to take you. Tonight: Let the fun begin.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

You could come across as being irritable or tenacious when you are teasing several friends. Be careful! Someone else might not read this behavior as it is intended. Your actions could be the source of a misunderstanding. Laugh and lighten up. Tonight: Play it low-key, please.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

You have the ability to express yourself clearly. You can't seem to get past a hassle or a problem, which is a result of others not understanding you. Invite those who seem confused into a conversation in order to figure out where the mix-up lies. Tonight: Catch up on a friend's news.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

You will buy a loved one a gift or a token of affection, which could be separate from this person's Christmas present. Your thoughtfulness makes a big difference, yet there is an element of confusion surrounding this gift. Listen and share openly. Tonight: So what if you overindulge?

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

You experience clarity with your feelings, and it

opens you up to new possibilities and exciting changes. Nevertheless, in a discussion about a particular topic today, you might feel as if you are wading in quicksand and that someone is not getting your message. Tonight: All smiles.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

You might feel as if you are playing a game of "Who's on first. What's on second" with someone. You just can't seem to get clarity, as nearly every question leads to more questions. Say little, and become the observer in order to get more answers. Tonight: Do a vanishing act.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

You might want to approach a situation in a different way. You'll deal with others better and will succeed more often if you work within groups. The confusion that mounts will be short-lived. Perhaps someone involved just needs to relax. Tonight: Where your friends are.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

Take a look at the amount of work or errands you need to complete before making other commitments, as enticing as they might be. A long lunch with a loved one could make you very happy. A touch of chaos adds to the day's intrigue. Relax. Tonight: Could be late.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

You are right in your element and are willing to gain a better sense of what is needed. A partner or an associate might be vested in adding confusion, which makes it necessary and wise to postpone your decision. Look at the big picture. Tonight: Read between the lines.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

Work through and deal with a problem involving a partner. Expressing compassion could be difficult amid all the confusion. You might want to rethink a decision that seems like a good idea. Give yourself time to come up with an adequate conclusion. Tonight: Chat over dinner.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

Defer to someone else, and remain sure of yourself. You want to understand where he or she is coming from. Let this person follow the natural course that is determined by his or her thinking, and both of you will be pleased with the end results. Tonight: Just do not be alone.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

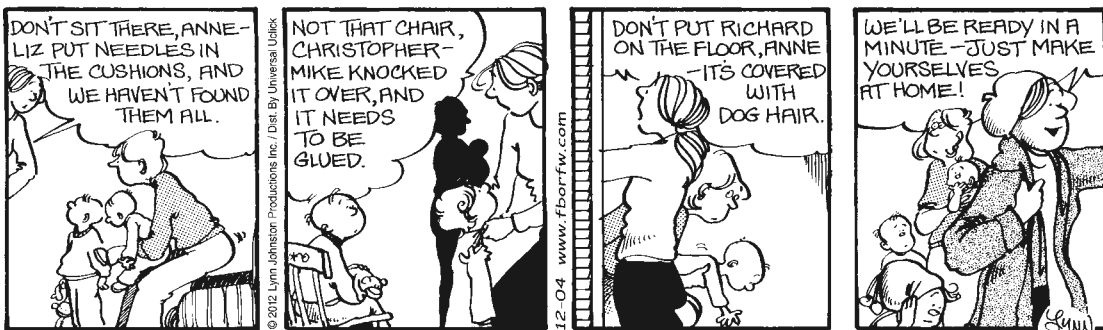
Pace yourself, and know what your expectations are. A loved one might try to determine exactly what it is that you want. His or her questions make little sense to you. Follow through on what you know to be best, yet be kind to this person. Tonight: Try a relaxing activity.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

