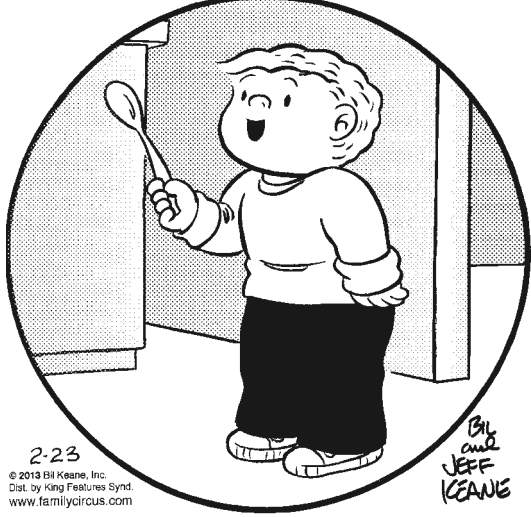


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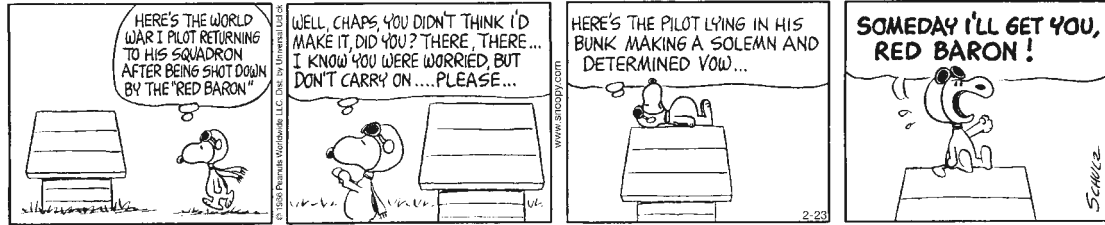
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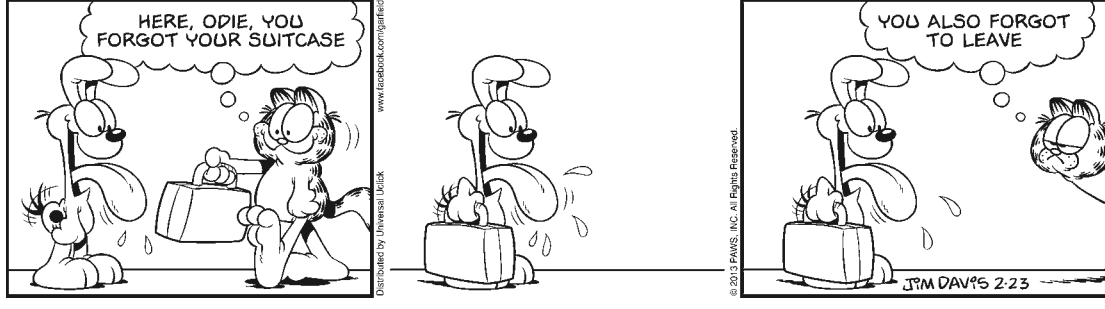
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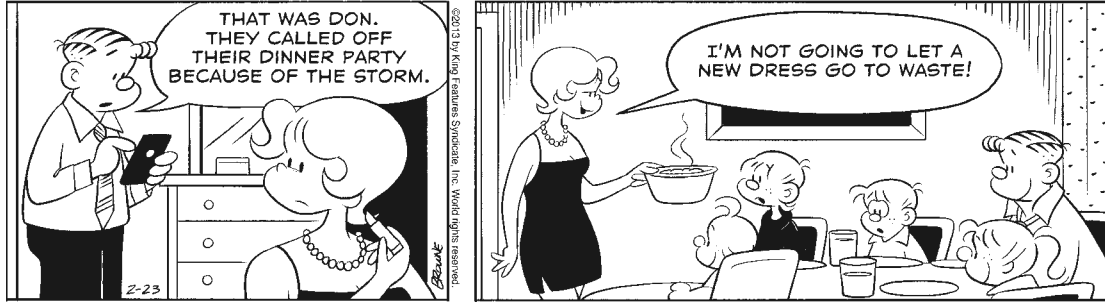
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Parents' Hair-Trigger Anger Keeps Teen At A Distance

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 15-year-old student who reads your column every day, and I hope you can help me. I want to be closer to my parents. They yell at my siblings and me and call us names. It hurts me very much. If we make a mistake — even a little one — or forget our chores, we can expect to be insulted, yelled at, etc. I have learned to tune them out, but I don't understand how such intelligent people like my parents can act this way. Years ago, I decided to talk to them about it, but that was seen as an act of defiance. My parents, especially my father, can't take constructive criticism and respond with more yelling. Each of our arguments leaves me upset for days. But I still believe I need to do something. I want to be close to them before it's too late, but I have lost so much respect and trust for them, and they probably feel the same. Please, Abby, I don't know what to do. I would greatly appreciate your advice, although I know you are very busy. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. — HOPEFUL IN NEW YORK

DEAR HOPEFUL: You have my sympathy. Harsh words can leave wounds that last longer than physical bruises. Some parents develop hair-trigger tempers when they are under financial pressure. Others, without realizing it, model their behavior on the way their parents raised THEM and overreact when their children make mistakes. Because you haven't been able to get through to your father, talk to a trusted adult relative about the fact that you would like to be closer to your parents but don't know how. If they hear it from another adult, they might be more open to the message.

DEAR ABBY: I am a 26-year-old mother of a 13-month-old daughter, "Lissa." I am a "by-the-book"

mom. I'm still breastfeeding and I am strict about what I allow my daughter to eat. She has just barely started to eat table food.

I don't want my child to have bad eating habits, so I try to give her only healthy items at dinnertime. Her dad, on the other hand, thinks it's funny to give her junk, including sugar. When she was only 2 months old, I caught him giving her licorice. The other day, it was soda and ice cream. I don't agree with this, and it's causing us a lot of fights. When we sit down to dinner, I have Lissa's meal set aside. But before I can sit down, her dad starts giving her things off his plate and then she won't eat her dinner. I have told him I don't like it, but he doesn't understand that I want to teach her good eating habits.



DEAR ABBY

Jeanne Phillips

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Am I wrong in trying so hard? Or should I just give up and let her eat junk? — TRYING MY BEST IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR TRYING: Parenting is supposed to be a team sport and I'm more concerned about the fact that Lissa's dad is undercutting you than what's going into her mouth right now. If he continues, in another year or two, your little girl will regard him as a pushover and you as a big meanie.

You may need an impartial mediator to get through to Lissa's father, and the perfect person to do that is your child's pediatrician. Let the doctor tell Daddy that the more she is given sweets, the more she'll crave them. The only thing about your approach that might be of concern to me is your calling yourself a "by-the-book" mother. A conscientious parent not only goes by the book and is consistent, but she also uses her head and listens to her heart. I hope you will remember that.

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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 Pisces and a Moon in Leo.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR SATURDAY, FEB. 23, 2013:

This year others are drawn to you like a bear is to honey. Many doors open up as a result. There is a theme of confusion that rides through your communication. You will learn to confirm meetings and question that which does not sound logical. If you are single, it might be difficult to get a relationship off the ground. The period prior to summer will be excellent for meeting potential suitors. If you are attached, the two of you will need to work on your communication, as misunderstandings tend to occur too easily. LEO makes you smile. 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) You might be mulling a lot over. You could have some difficulty tossing yourself into whatever might be occurring around you. A loved one knows how to entice you. Once you let go of the issue at hand, you will start living in the moment. Tonight: Let the good times happen.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20) You hear from a friend and decide to invite him or her to a late brunch or dinner. Entertain from home or go to a place nearby. Structure your weekend near home base. Someone at a distance might need more of your time. Make this a priority. Tonight: Where your friends are.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20) Your sense of direction takes you right out the door after making calls. Meet a friend with whom you have made plans. Your levity and humor make all the difference in what occurs. Touch base with an older family member. Tonight: Burn the midnight oil.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22) You might not like everything about your plans right now. Apparently, your budget is not the same as a family member's. You will find a way to adapt, or you'll figure out how to let this person know that down-scaling would be a good idea. Tonight: Enjoy yourself wherever you are.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22) If you want to take off for a day trip, do. Just don't be surprised if you encounter a snafu along the way.

Communication about meeting times and places could be the source of the problem. You might be happiest getting together with a close friend. Tonight: Initiate a talk.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22) Take some much-needed private time. Catch up on emails, or just be a couch potato. You could be taken aback by the many options that appear. You understand a lot more than you originally thought. A partner surprises you. Tonight: You do not need to explain anything.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22) It could be a hassle to change plans or do something very different. Be honest with yourself, and know that you might not have a choice. You grasp the importance of a special person at a distance. Allow in more playfulness. Tonight: Wherever you are, others will follow.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21) A friend could be difficult or out of sorts. Call this person and listen to what he or she has to say. Money dealings will need to be observed much more carefully than they have been in the past. You could need some downtime to recharge your battery. Tonight: To the wee hours.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 21-DEC. 21) You might decide to break through the veil of confusion that surrounds you and others. You are in a changeable period right now. During the next few weeks, you could see the flaws in your thinking, or where you need to make a change. Tonight: Say "yes" to an adventure.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19) Deal with a loved one directly. The topic at hand might be more difficult than you would have liked. If you believe you will have a quick conclusion to this discussion, think again. A misunderstanding is weaving through this conversation. Tonight: Agree to an offer.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18) Defer to others, and you will have less difficulty. However, if your anger suddenly flares up, remember that you let others take the lead. In the future, it might be a good idea not to get involved. Tonight: The more people around you, the better the night will be.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20) Pace yourself, and get ahead of what needs to happen. An unexpected twist involving your finances could surprise you. Don't take good luck for granted. A domestic issue will work out much better than you think. Squeeze in some exercise. Tonight: You do not have to go far.

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MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS



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