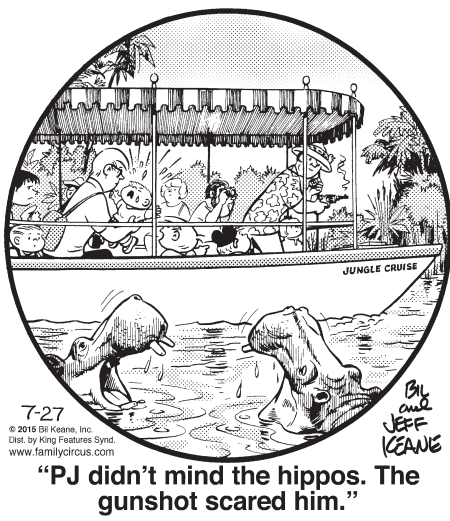


FAMILY CIRCUS | BILL KEANE



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Wedding May Be Wrong Time For Found Father To Reappear

DEAR ABBY: I am 32 and getting married in a year. My biological father lives in Spain and has never been to the U.S. My mother met him when she was teaching English there. I was born in the states and never knew or spoke to my dad growing up. When I was 5, I was adopted by my mom's then-husband.

At 20, while studying in Spain, I located my father and his wife. We maintain a good relationship, but I haven't been back there, and he has never met my family.

Mom harbors a lot of resentment toward my father. She tells me he took no interest in me as a baby and never sent any money or letters. She gets emotional when he is brought up in conversation. He doesn't feel this way toward her. When I mentioned to Mom that I plan to invite him and his wife to the wedding, she got upset. She told me I have no business inviting him and that she doesn't want to see him.

I do not share my mother's resentment. I don't want my father to feel excluded. I worry about Mom's feelings and about my father's first U.S. trip being during the wedding when I will surely be distracted with lots of things. Please advise. — BRIDE TORN IN TWO IN NEBRASKA

DEAR BRIDE: Your father may have no hard feelings toward your mother because it appears he accepted no emotional or financial responsibility at the time you were conceived. If he knew she was pregnant and offered no help, then all of that fell on her shoulders.

It's appropriate you are worried about your mother's feelings, because you should be. If you want a relationship with your father, no one can prevent you. However, if he hasn't "earned" the right to be at your wedding and if you have any sensitivity at all to your mother's feelings, entertain him in the U.S. at a later date when he can have your full attention. (I hesitate to say "the at-

attention he deserves" because I'm not sure he deserves any.)

DEAR ABBY: I'm 56 and still don't know what I want to do with my life. I have no real talents or passions. I have 1,000 interests and hobbies, none of which would ever develop into a career. I have worked whatever job I could get to pay the bills (more or less), but they have all been near minimum wage, so 10 years from retirement, I have no savings.

I got to the point I was so miserable at my last job that I quit without having another one waiting for me, so I'll probably end up taking whatever dead-end job I can get just to get a paycheck. How can I convince potential employers I can do something different when I don't believe it myself? — DIANE IN CANTON, ILL.

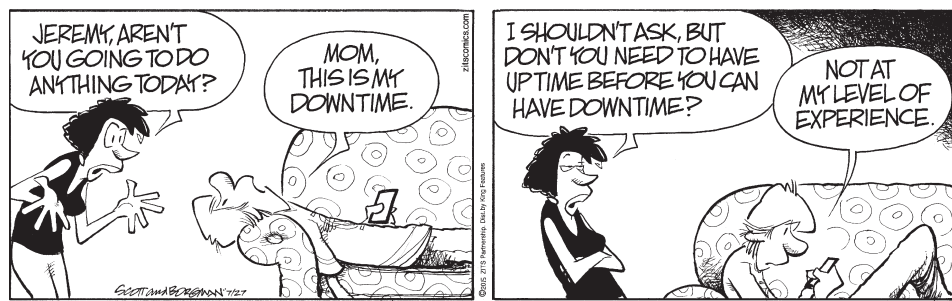
DEAR DIANE: Your problem is you have lost faith in yourself. If you have had "1,000 interests and hobbies," I'm betting you are proficient in at least half of them, which means you DO have a wealth of varied experiences to offer some lucky employer. Please keep that in mind the next time you go for an interview, because as long as you have the determination, it is never too late.

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

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$14 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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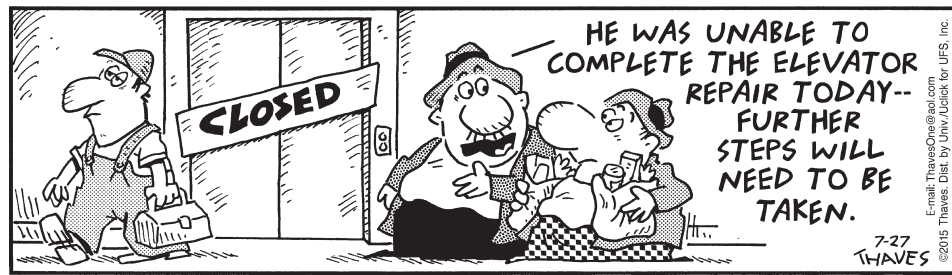
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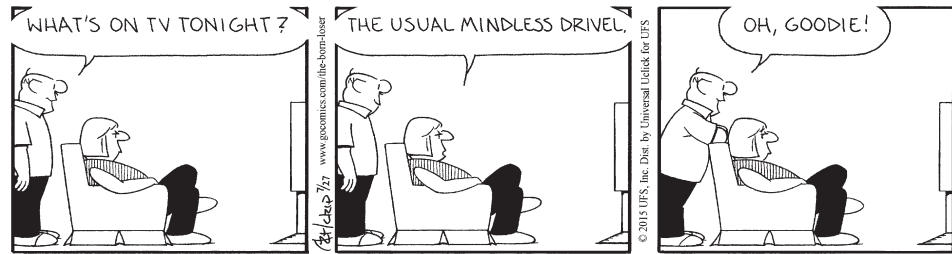
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