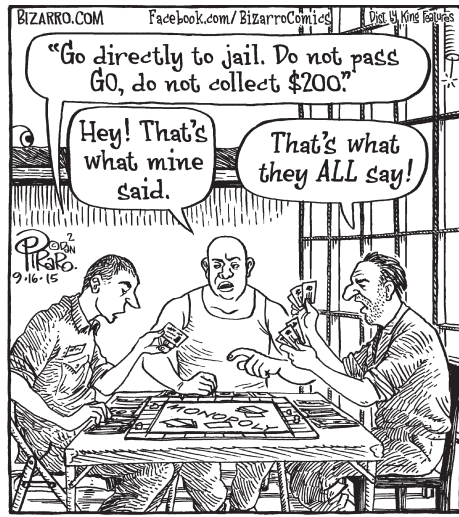


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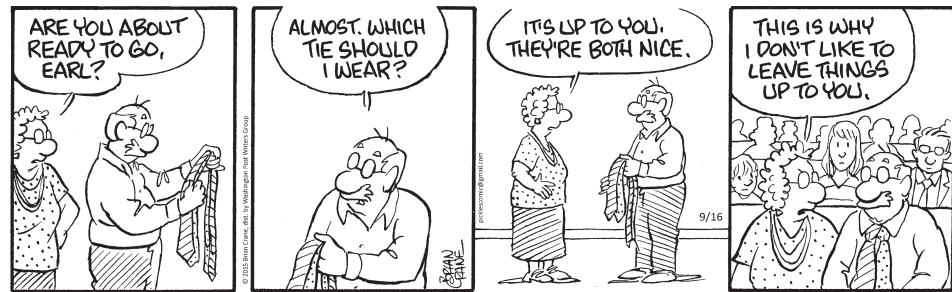
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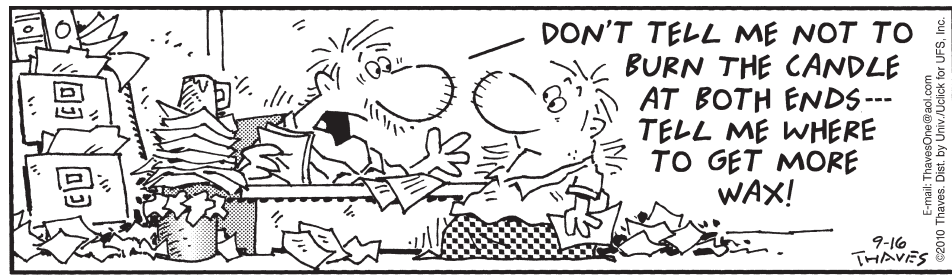
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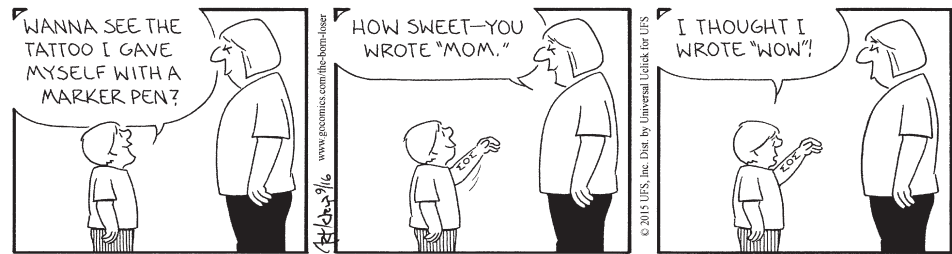
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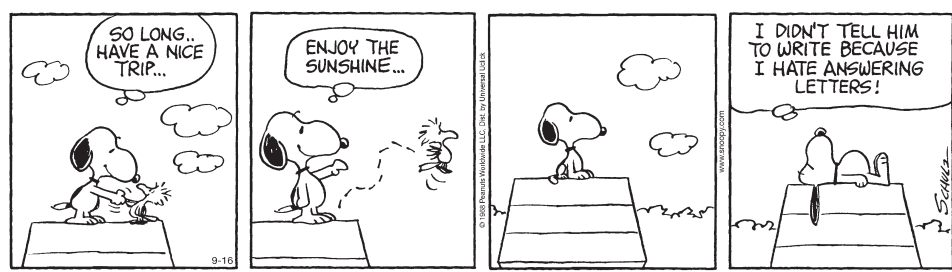
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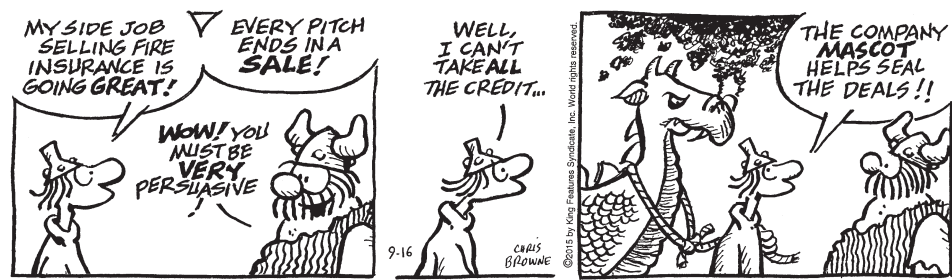
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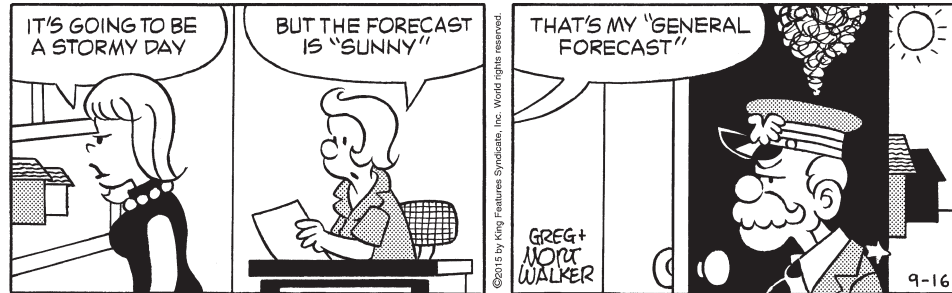
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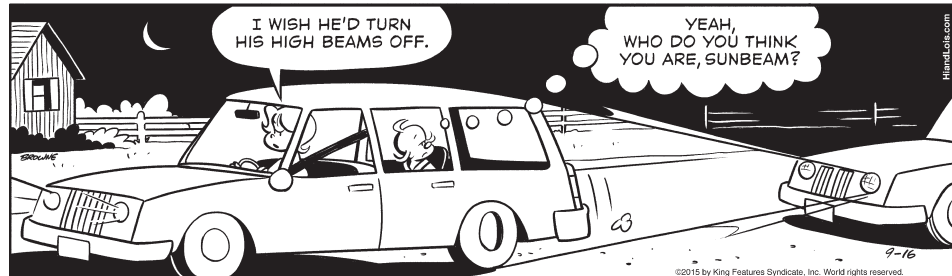
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BETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



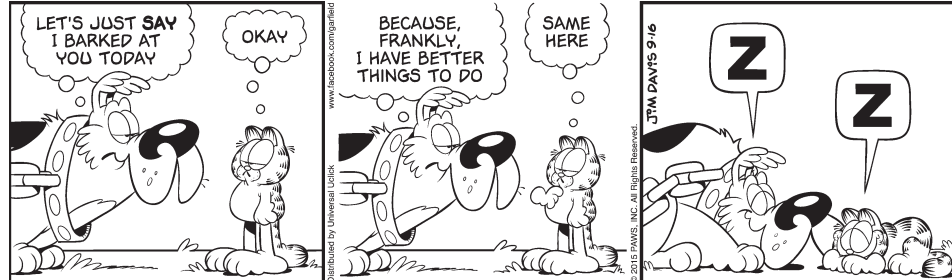
HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



# Practice Makes Perfect When Polishing Your Social Skills

DEAR ABBY: I'm 13 years old, and I want to know how I can make my life easier and not be as shy as I am. I have a lot of friends at school, but of course they're not popular either. I want to still have those friends, but I'd like to be able to strike up conversations with other people. When I try, I get nervous and chicken out before I can get a word out.

I want to improve my communication skills and come across as more friendly and natural. My aunt told me you have a booklet that can help. If you do, how do I get one? — NICOLE FROM NEVADA

DEAR NICOLE: Everybody wants to be well-liked, accepted, feel needed, appreciated — and of course, loved. It's essential to a person's self-esteem to know other people think they're worth having as a friend.

If you think you're alone in being shy, let me assure you that you have lots of company. No one emerges from the womb knowing how to be social. It's a skill that has to be developed. Like you, many others could use a little coaching on how to be the kind of person others find attractive, interesting and worth knowing.

Achieving it isn't always easy because social skills don't come naturally to everyone. My booklet "How to Be Popular" contains tips on how to approach others, and what to say and NOT say when trying to make conversation. You can order one by sending your name and address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds), to Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price. When you get it, don't just read it once. Keep it on hand for reference because it contains many helpful suggestions for polishing social skills —

which, like any other skills, takes time, effort and practice.

DEAR ABBY: I have recently begun a relationship with my biological father, "Frank," after not seeing him since I was 4. My mother and stepfather raised me and I am very close to them. But after talking to Frank and meeting him face to face, I have gotten close to him as well.

His relationship with Mom ended badly. They were very young and he takes all the blame. Mom has always said that if I have a relationship with Frank, she wants no part of it. After I told her I have been talking to him for two years, she became upset and has been short with me and my wife ever since.

I want to continue to develop what I have with my biological father, but I'm not sure how to handle Mom if she's going to be so hurt and upset over it. Can you advise? — ANDY IN GEORGIA

DEAR ANDY: Tell your mother you have noticed a change in her behavior, and feel that she is punishing you for having an interest in knowing your biological father. If that's the case, in the future do not discuss anything about Frank with her since she has made clear that she doesn't want to hear it.

If you haven't discussed this with your stepfather, please consider enlisting his help because he may be able to explain your feelings to your mother better than you can.

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.



DEAR ABBY  
Jeanne Phillips

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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 Virgo and a Moon in Libra if born before 11:43 a.m. (PDT). Afterward, the Moon will be in Scorpio.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 16, 2015:

This year you discover that your moods can change rather quickly. The source of your emotional swings tends to be money-related. You might have decided that you want to build a stronger financial base. In the next two years, you will see the rewards of this goal. If you are single, you could meet someone sensational. Together, you'll make a great pair. If you are attached, the two of you often react strongly to each other. If your sweetie can't handle your mood swings, your changeability in the next 12 months will be a source of trouble. SCORPIO tends to be a mystery.

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 could be dragging far more than you realize. Motivate yourself by working on a project that has been on the back burner. Be willing to ask a partner to pitch in and help you. You have done plenty of favors for this person in the past. Tonight: Chill out at home.

### TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

\*\*\* If you are angry with someone, do yourself a favor and opt for a discussion rather than holding in your feelings and exploding. You might be surprised how much can be handled calmly in this situation. Tonight: Let someone explain where he or she is coming from.

### GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

\*\*\*\* Clear the air in a sensitive way. You will be surprised by what you can accomplish once you have aired out a problem. Your schedule becomes busier and busier. Be ready for a pleasant diversion or some interference, depending on your outlook. Tonight: Squeeze in some exercise.

### CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

\*\*\* Extend yourself, and be open to a different approach, especially regarding a domestic matter. You will be the one in charge who has the final say on what goes on in your home. Relaxing your boundaries might be difficult. Tonight: Add some spice to the mix.

### LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

\*\*\* You might not realize that you often come

off as pushy. Today, someone could start backing away because of what he or she perceives your attitude to be. A conversation is likely to be melodramatic later in the day. Tonight: Have a long-overdue talk with a family member.

### VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

\*\*\*\* You might be at the point of changing direction, but try to hang in there a little while longer. With Jupiter, the planet of luck, in your sign, there could be a sudden shift in what is going on. Communication brings better results in the afternoon. Tonight: Say what you feel.

### LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

\*\*\*\* You could become the office cheerleader this morning, as you seem to express so much positive energy and enthusiasm. Be aware of the costs of choices you make in the afternoon. Listen to what is being said, but clarify where you stand. Tonight: Make it your treat.

### SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

\*\*\* You might wonder why you have experienced such extremes lately. You seem to go from wanting to cocoon at home to feeling ready for nearly anything. Do not get into someone else's conflict, even if you are vested in the outcome. Tonight: Whatever suits your fancy.

### SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

\*\*\* You could be in a situation where you would prefer to share more of what is happening within you. Do this in the morning, as others are likely to be more receptive then. All you need to do is observe and listen. Cut off someone who is being sarcastic. Tonight: Take a personal night.

### CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

\*\*\*\* You might be baffled by a boss's response to you. Clearly, this person has an issue with something you have done. In a discussion with him or her, make an attempt to clear the air without getting personal. Neutralize any negativity. Tonight: Join a friend.

### AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

\*\*\*\* You will be on top of a project and have the perspective needed to bring it to fruition. How you see a personal matter could change after a conversation. Please confirm what you have heard before reacting. In the long run, verifying is the smart thing to do. Tonight: A force to behold.

### PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

\*\*\*\* You might be able to visualize a better interaction with someone who is key to your life. Sometimes you get in a tangle with this person. Neither of you is comfortable with the situation. Have this discussion in a good moment. Tonight: Say "yes" to a fun invitation.

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## BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



## BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



## MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

