Woman in unhappy relationship should cut her losses and go

DEAR ABBY

DEAR ABBY: I have been with my fiance since 2006. We expected to be married in 2008, but my grandmother died a month before my wedding, and then he was arrested because of charges stemming from a sexual relationship he'd had with a 17-year-old girl he had been counseling.

Since then, we have had a daughter, but through it all there has been cheating, drugs, jail, no job, and constant excuses about why our sex life no longer exists. We have also had physical altercations, which he was arrested for.

I am no longer happy with this relationship. The only reason I stay is because of our children. I'm only 33 and don't want to live my life in misery anymore, but I will sacrifice my happiness for my children. I am confused and don't know what to do. I'm just going through the motions in life. I work full time, coach my son's soccer team and am living with MS.

He does help somewhat, but it would be better if he would get a job. My mother watches my kids while I am working and after they get out of school. He claims because he doesn't have a driver's license he can't get a job. Really? How many people in this world don't drive and still have a job? Please give me some advice. I have reached my breaking point. — **DOING THE BEST I CAN**

DEAR DOING THE BEST YOU CAN: You say you are willing to sacrifice your happiness with this loser for your children. Why? You are not married to him, and he is emotionally neglectful, physically abusive and contributes nothing financially. Admit to yourself that the "romance" has been a mistake, and as soon as it's safe, get away from him. If he ever finds a job, the state will help you collect child support, but if he doesn't, you'll have one less mouth to feed.

DEAR ABBY: My mom insists on including my ex-husband and his wife at our family gatherings. I have told her repeatedly that it makes me very uncomfortable, but she even included them in the gift exchange last Christmas. What should I do? Not go?

My sister has already laid a guilt trip on me. Must I go and have Christmas with my ex like we're one big happy family? (If we had been happy, we would not have gotten divorced.) What are your thoughts on this? — **LIVING IN DYSFUNCTION JUNCTION**

DEAR LIVING: If you and your ex were married for a long time, I can see why your mother might consider him still part of the family and want to include him. However, out of consideration for your feelings, it should be on a limited basis -- not every holiday. (Could she be trying to punish you because she blames you for the divorce?)

Because it would make you uncomfortable and your mother knows it, make plans to do something you WOULD enjoy -- perhaps a trip out of town to be with friends or to a different climate. And please, don't feel guilty if you do -- regardless of what your sister says.

DEAR ABBY: What do you say to your only son who can't even call to tell you he is getting married? He posted it on Facebook, and I was notified via a text from my sister.

Our relationship isn't the issue. He just doesn't seem to be able to use his phone for TALKING. Your thoughts? — **OUTSIDE THE LOOP IN OREGON**

DEAR OUTSIDE THE LOOP: Because your son seems oblivious to the fact that news of this kind should be conveyed to the immediate family personally rather than in a "bulletin," EXPLAIN to him how it made you feel to receive the news the way you did. He owes you an apology.

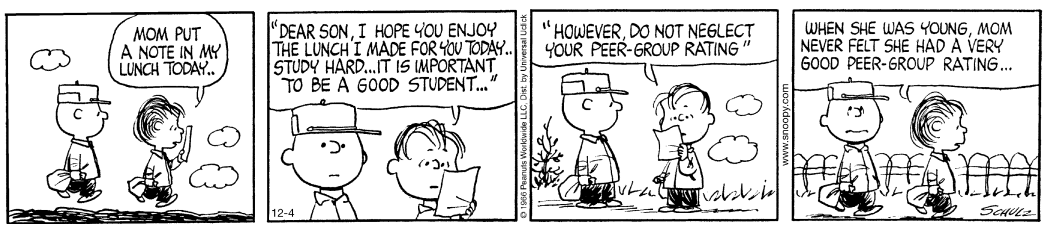
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

COMICS

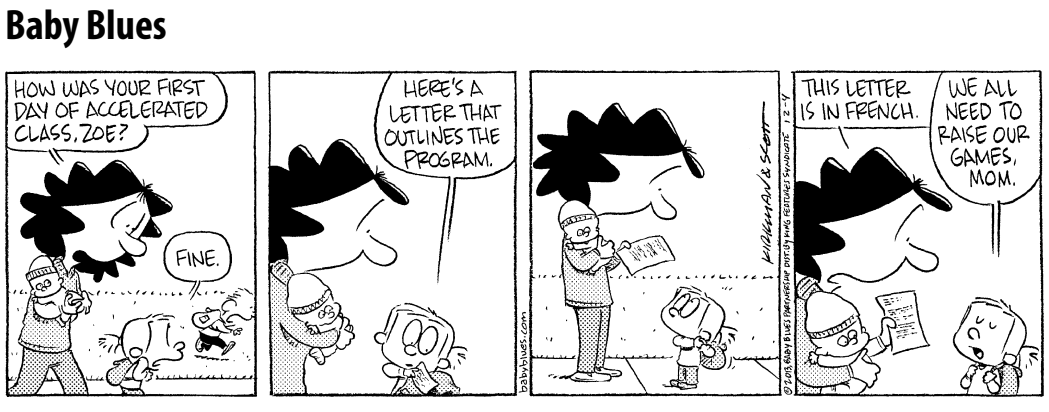
Tundra

Hagar the Horrible

Peanuts



Baby Blues



Dilbert

su|do|ku

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		8			6		2	7
			9			5		4
					4		1	
				3	5	6		1
		2	6		1	7		
3		1	7	8				
	4		1					
2		5			3			
6	7		5			1		

Instructions for play: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

That's all there is to it. There's no math involved. The grid has numbers, but nothing has to add up to anything else. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic. It's fun. It's challenging. It's addictive!

Solving time is typically from 10 to 30 minutes, depending on your skill and experience. The solution for today's puzzle will be published in Saturday's paper. Or you can go to www.sudoku.com to find the solution.

8	4	7	3	9	6	1	5	2
9	1	5	8	7	2	3	6	4
2	3	6	1	5	4	7	9	8
3	5	8	9	1	7	4	2	6
4	2	9	5	6	3	8	7	1
6	7	1	4	2	8	5	3	9
5	9	2	7	8	1	6	4	3
7	8	3	6	4	9	2	1	5
1	6	4	2	3	5	9	8	7

HELOISE'S KITCHENEERING
BY HELOISE

What Are Butter-Flavored Granules?

Dear Heloise: A few years ago, my mother gave me a book of recipes from her church. Several of the recipes call for BUTTER-FLAVORED GRANULES. What are they, and where can I find them? — L. King in California

Butter-flavored granules are a powdered form of butter that is fat-free, gluten-free and good for those watching calories. The main ingredients are natural butter flavor (processed into a dry form), maltodextrin (a natural carbohydrate that comes from corn) and salt.

You can find them in most grocery stores in the baking or spice aisle. Keep the top sealed tightly, and once opened, store in the refrigerator. They are good to keep on hand, as they can be used for many foods. — Heloise

P.S.: I love them! I sometimes mix some with nonfat sour cream or yogurt to top a baked potato. Or I use them on steamed veggies, in brown rice with veggies and on hot oatmeal, among a few other things.

STORING KETCHUP

Dear Readers: Did you know that ketchup has a high acid level and so it doesn't NEED to be refrigerated? Depending on where you keep it and the temperature, though, its stability and quality can be affected.

So, what do you do? You can store ketchup in the pantry, but manufacturers recommend that you refrigerate it for the best flavor and quality. The same with mustard: You don't have to refrigerate it, but it is recommended. — Heloise

EATING OUT

Dear Heloise: A year ago, I decided to really take care of myself. Healthier food choices are now a part of my life. A lot of my meals are eaten in restaurants. Here are some tips I use when eating out:

■ Sauces and gravies "on the side" or not at all.

■ Salad dressing on the side.

■ Order food that is broiled, steamed or roasted. Anything fried is full of fat grams and calories.

■ Red sauce instead of white (usually cream!) for pasta.

■ Corn tortillas instead of flour, and whole black beans instead of refried.

■ Steamed rice instead of fried.

With these simple changes, I still get to enjoy eating out with friends and family and know that I'm eating as healthy as I can. — Jessica G. in Tennessee

SAUSAGE WRAPPER

Dear Heloise: When I buy sausage that comes in a roll, I freeze it. When it's frozen, it doesn't leave a lot of sausage stuck to the wrapper when you cut it off. You must be careful, because it's slippery. — Gloria in Kansas

EASY CLOSE

Dear Heloise: It's frustrating trying to open bread ties. When I get the wire unwound, I replace it with a clothespin. No more twisting and untying. — Pat M. in Florida

GROUND MEAT

Dear Heloise: I use a heavy meat-tenderizing tool (the type with cleats) to break up ground beef or sausage being browned for chili or meat sauce. — Ruth B. in Kansas

CROSSWORD
By THOMAS JOSEPH

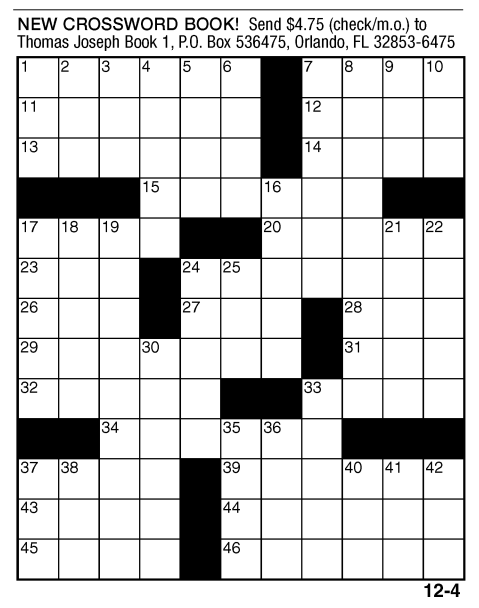
ACROSS
1 Fight
7 First man
11 Devotee
12 Designer Wang
13 Crew activity
14 Gung-ho
15 Picked up quickly
17 Put together
20 Worry
23 Flamenco cry
24 Reckless jaunt
26 Crater part
27 Reverent wonder
28 Keats work
29 Dodged
31 Convent occupant
32 Door holder's words
33 African serpents
34 Delhi native
37 Lotion additive
39 Geriatrics topic
43 Bobcat's cousin
44 Cotton pest
45 For fear that
46 Useful skills

DOWN
1 Watering hole
2 Hubbub
3 Road rescue
4 Hackneyed
5 Letterman rival
6 Therefore
7 Film set on Pandora
8 Prayers
9 Onassis nickname
10 Fuming
16 Typed in
17 Principled
18 Full of energy
19 Military punishments
21 Make sense
22 Prom crowd
24 Blasé
25 Need to pay
30 Cry from the first in line
33 Peruvian peaks
35 Corn Belt state
36 Brighton brews
37 Completely
38 Caustic stuff
40 Blvd.'s kin
41 "Va-moose!"
42 Golfer Ernie

R	I	G	S	■	■	A	D	D	I	S
O	N	R	E	D	■	D	O	O	N	E
S	A	U	N	A	■	A	H	O	L	E
I	S	M	■	R	A	M	■	H	U	T
N	E	P	A	L	I	■	T	A	C	O
■	C	Y	B	E	R	P	U	N	K	■
■	■	■	A	N	D	U	P	■	■	■
■	H	I	B	E	R	N	A	T	E	■
L	E	N	A	■	O	S	C	A	R	S
O	L	D	■	A	P	T	■	M	O	P
S	E	R	I	F	■	E	L	A	T	E
E	N	A	C	T	■	R	E	L	I	C
S	A	G	E	S	■	■	D	E	C	K

Previous Puzzle

NEW CROSSWORD BOOK! Send $4.75 (check/m.o.) to Thomas Joseph Book 1, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475



12-4

CROSSWORD
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 General Bradley
5 English county
10 Prominent
12 One of the primates
13 Elevator stop
14 Make law
15 German article
16 React to a punch
18 Macbeth prop
20 Cider girl of song
21 French affirmatives
23 Winter air quality
24 Comic's stock
26 Prayer ender
28 Photographer Goldin
29 Ump's call
31 Bruins legend
32 Supermarket worker
36 Cockiness
39 "Norma —"
40 Vietnam city
41 Seething
43 Heart, for one
44 Flower part
45 Garden pests
46 Plays the ponies

DOWN
1 Did in
2 Sasha's sister
3 Surrounded by
4 Old auto
5 Former home of the Mets
6 Suspended
7 John Lennon song
8 Arrived quickly
9 Catch
11 Creator of the Grinch
17 Numerical prefix
19 Obtained
22 Game outings
24 Shakers, tumblers, and the like
25 Close enough to hit
27 Sister of Jo, Amy, and Beth
28 Non-attendee
30 Playwright Burrows
33 Potential raisin
34 Bother
35 Reacts to a punch
37 Incite
38 Seed-removing machines
42 Yank's foe

■	R	A	F	T	■	S	P	A	S	■
C	O	V	E	R	■	H	A	S	T	O
A	L	O	N	E	■	E	L	C	I	D
S	L	I	C	E	S	■	■	E	N	D
T	I	D	E	■	P	R	O	N	G	S
E	N	S	■	B	L	I	N	D	S	■
■	■	■	S	E	I	N	E	■	■	■
■	A	T	T	A	C	K	■	P	O	L
M	R	H	Y	D	E	■	P	U	M	A
A	R	E	■	■	S	P	I	C	E	S
T	O	S	C	A	■	A	N	K	L	E
S	W	E	A	R	■	S	T	E	E	R
■	S	A	N	K	■	S	O	R	T	■

Previous Puzzle

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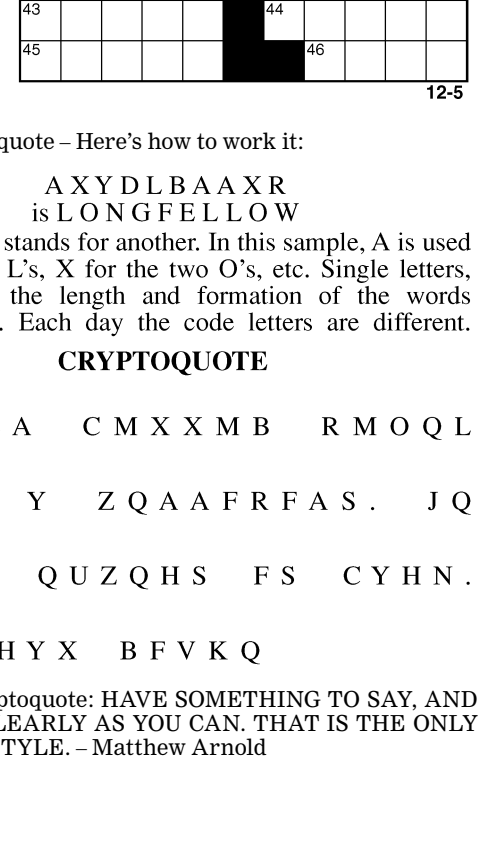

12-5

Daily Cryptoquote – Here's how to work it:

A X Y D L B A A X R
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-4 CRYPTOQUOTE

Y V B Y L A C M X X M B R M O Q L E X M R Y Z Q A A F R F A S. J Q B M O ' S Q U Z Q H S F S C Y H N. — M A H Y X B F V K Q

Previous Cryptoquote: HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, AND SAY IT AS CLEARLY AS YOU CAN. THAT IS THE ONLY SECRET OF STYLE. – Matthew Arnold