

DEAR ABBY | JEANNE PHILLIPS

Teen's penchant for piercing earns him unwanted attention

DEAR ABBY: I am an 18-year-old male, and every day I face judgment, cruel remarks, disapproving stares and other harassment.

The reason? I want to be a tattoo and piercing artist. I currently have one tattoo (which my shirtsleeve covers) and more than 20 piercings. Eight of the piercings are in my face, and most of the others are in my ears. My main ear holes are stretched out to a half-inch.

I can't walk down the street without hearing some comment, or someone stopping and staring, slack-jawed. Even friendly inquiries are becoming irritating. I'm passionate about tattoos and piercings and have been since childhood. I chose my piercings to balance each other and create an art form on my face and ears.

At school I was judged and stereotyped at the beginning of each year and would go out of my way to prove I am a nice, respectable human being with feelings. Now, with a new school term approaching, how can I get people to stop judging me and asking dumb questions like, "How bad did that hurt?" -- FUTURE SKIN ARTIST, PORT HURON, MICH.

DEAR FUTURE SKIN ARTIST: You have chosen to look different, so you shouldn't be surprised at the staring and the questions. The sooner you realize it and learn to answer the questions without being defensive, the better your chances will be of being accepted.

P.S. Perhaps in the future you should consider moving to Los Angeles. In this town everyone has seen almost everything, and people who are different are less shocking.

DEAR ABBY: I have been dating "Daryl" for four years. We're very much in love and usually get along well. The problem is I'm a scheduled-oriented person. I like to plan ahead what we're going to do and what time we're going to do it.

Daryl, on the other hand, hates schedules and sometimes flat-out refuses to commit to something because he "doesn't want to be tied down" to one.

I have tried to be more flexible, and I think Daryl has tried to bend a little for me, too. However, I'm worried that this issue will

eventually come between us. I don't want to break up with him over it because I really do love him, and this seems like a petty thing. Please advise. -- CLOCKING IN FROM ILLINOIS

DEAR CLOCKING IN: Your concerns are not petty. I don't know how "loosey-goosey" Daryl is, but men who "refuse to commit" and "don't want to be tied down" are often not only extremely disorganized, but also confirmed bachelors.

You and Daryl have been dating for four years. Please give serious consideration to whether this is the way you want to spend the rest of your life, because your differences will be a constant source of friction.

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.

YOUR HEALTH | DR. DONOHUE

Are sleeping pills worse than insomnia?

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: I am on Lunesta, a prescription sleeping pill for insomnia. The nurse practitioner wanted me to take half a pill every third night, but that didn't work for me. I have to take half a pill every night. Now she wants me to take half a pill every other night because she's afraid that it will become habit-forming. What do you think of this medicine? -- S.S.

ANSWER: All sleeping pills should be taken for as short a time as possible. "As short a time as possible" implies that the person recovers from whatever it is that's preventing him or her from falling asleep. In the real world, a correctible cause for insomnia often isn't found, and then a person is faced with having to stay on a sleeping pill or stay awake for most of the night. I would choose option one, as long as the sleeping pill isn't causing any trouble, like daytime sleepiness. From time to time, it's in your interest to try and stop the pill. You might find that sleep isn't as elusive as it was when you started taking it.

Lunesta is one of the newer sleeping pills, tolerated well by most. It starts to work in 10 minutes, so it's useful for those who find falling asleep difficult, and it has extended action to

prevent waking in the very-early-morning hours.

Lunesta has caused some users to behave differently. A normally reserved person might become quite aggressive. It also has caused a very few to do things they have no recollection of doing. A very small number of people have driven a car under the influence of Lunesta and have not realized that they did it. If a person has such experiences, then immediately stopping the pill is common sense.

Have you tried nondrug approaches to falling asleep? Go to bed and wake up at approximately the same time every day. Relax before bedtime. If you don't fall asleep within 20 minutes of lying down, get up and read or listen to music. Keep daytime naps to 20 minutes or less. Don't use caffeine within six hours of bedtime.

You can become dependent on Lunesta, as you can on most sleeping pills. Dependence means it's hard to stop the medicine. Gradually tapering the dose can usually allow people to break any dependence. I believe that sleeplessness is worse than the prospect of dependence.

Fibromyalgia is a common cause of insomnia. The booklet on this ailment explains it and

its treatment. To order a copy, write: Dr. Donohue -- No. 305, Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Enclose a check or money order (no cash) for \$4.75 U.S./\$6 Can. with the recipient's printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: Is eating cereal with added vitamins and minerals as good as taking a vitamin pill each day? -- M.L.

ANSWER: Sure, it is. A well-balanced diet provides all the needed vitamins and minerals. The catch lies in eating such a diet. Our ancestors survived pretty well without taking vitamin pills.

Dr. Donohue regrets that he is unable to answer individual letters, but he will incorporate them in his column whenever possible. Readers may write him or request an order form of available health newsletters at P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Readers may also order health newsletters from www.rbnmail.com. 2006 North America Syndicate Inc. All Rights Reserved

CROSSWORD | EUGENE SHEFFER

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 25 mins and a grid for yesterday's answer.

HOROSCOPE | JACQUELINE BIGAR

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, August 8, 2008

ARIES (March 21-April 19) ★★★★★ Intensity is the name of the game. New beginnings become possible if you allow others the space to act. No question about it, your creativity bubbles up out of the blue. You have answers, and others seem to sense this. No general announcement needed. Tonight: You are hot stuff.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ★★★★★ Make it your pleasure to enjoy your life more. Others present you with a myriad of options. Consider yourself the kid in the candy store who cannot get enough. Enjoy every moment. Tonight: Tension could build if you have too many expectations.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) ★★★★★ You see much quite quickly. Recognize just how much you can accomplish if you relax. A partnership might be more important than you initially realized. Investigate a new option that comes from a brainstorming session. Tonight: Easy does it. Get extra R and R.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) ★★★★★ You might want to understand what makes another person tick. The best way would be to engage this person in a creative, fun discussion. Imagine where he or she is coming from. New vistas open up. Tonight: Well, act like it is Friday night.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) ★★★★★ Are you still in the mood to be close to home? Do not allow others to distract you from your goals and wishes. You might be challenged by a family member. Can you deal with what is coming down? Only you can answer that. Tonight: At home.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) ★★★★★ Express your concerns about a problem. You might not need to solve the issue, but start by loosening up the airwaves. You could be surprised by what the end results are. Listen to your inner voice. Think before you react. You just might be overly sensitive. Tonight: Speak your mind.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) ★★ Listen to your instincts with finances, and do not let yourself get talked into something you might later regret. Investigate options with an open mind. Playing it conservatively might be very smart. Tonight: Your treat.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) ★★ You come from a basic premise, and that is "me first." Most people are like that all the time, so don't be embarrassed. A problem could happen when dealing with a boss. You might want to evaluate the issue from the other side. Tonight: Lead the weekend celebrations!

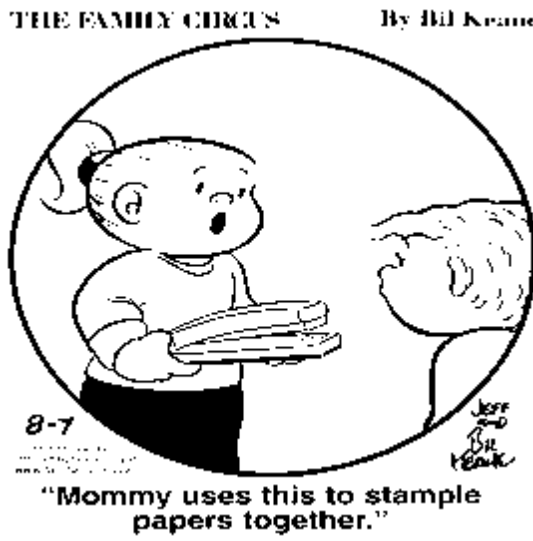
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) ★★ Step back and take your time. You might not be comfortable with news that heads your way. Don't worry; your ability to overcome a problem is beyond anything you might imagine. Just stop and visualize. Tonight: Vanish while you can.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) ★★★★★ You might want to see a relationship differently. A whole lot of news heads in your direction. You are lucky and will know how to interpret the facts properly. Tension builds with a partner. Tonight: Togetherness works.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) ★★★★★ You might be asked to go beyond the call of duty to handle a situation. You will respond positively, assuming that you are fortunate enough to be asked to do this special task. If feeling pushed, do say so. Tonight: In the limelight.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) ★★★★★ Look past the obvious when dealing with others. Perhaps what isn't said could be more important than what is said. Pretend to be a psychologist, and walk in another person's footsteps. Be an investigator as well. Tonight: Take off ASAP.

FAMILY CIRCUS | BILL KEANE



RETAIL | NORMAN FAULTI

Advertisement for Fantasy Coupons for Retail Managers, featuring a coupon for 50% off sales goal and a cartoon illustration of a woman holding a coupon.

BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



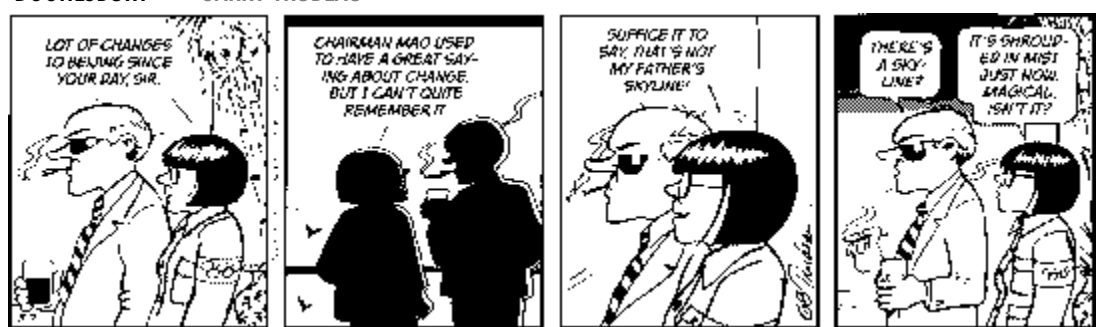
BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



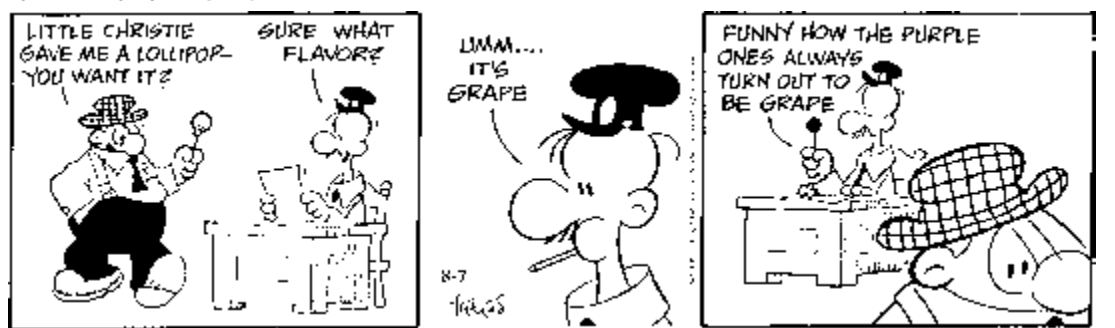
DOONESBURY | GARRY TRUBEAU



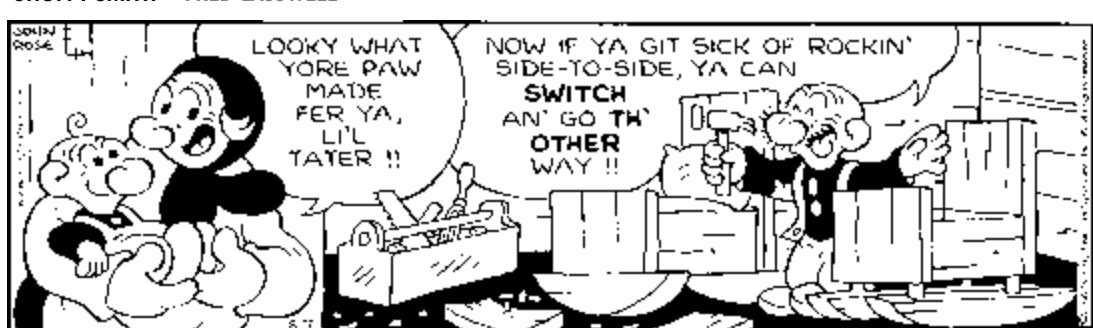
MARVIN | TOM ARMSTRONG



SAM AND SILO | DUMAS



SNUFFY SMITH | FRED LASSWELL



ZITS | BORGMAN & SCOTT

