

Boundaries are needed for overbearing mother



Well, six years later, I can't count all the incidents of drama and manipulation that she's created. She's incredibly overbearing.

Dear Annie: I have been in a relationship with my fiancé for seven years. When we first started dating and I met his mother, she cried and said, "Take care of him." Mind you, he's 52 years old. I didn't think anything of it.

She comes over for dinner at our house every Saturday night, and my boyfriend goes to her house throughout the week. She has many children and grandchildren in the area but calls him for everything. When my boyfriend and I have gone on weekend getaways to the coast, she's wanted to be included. The few times he told her no, she cried and said, "You know I love going!" I understand needing someone, but shouldn't there be boundaries?

I tried to be open in the first few years of the relationship -- calling her, reaching out -- but it only made things tenser. Things that I could overlook at first I find difficult, at best, to deal with now. I'm tired.

I have tried to talk to my companion. Have you noticed I have called him "fiance," "boyfriend" and "companion"? That's because I have no idea what to call him. When I ask what we're doing, he gets angry and stubborn. It's a pattern. Really, I know this man and I are not going to marry. I am not his wife; this is not my mother-in-law. But I want my time with him.

I just want to make him understand that I need my space and that I'm not happy with her dynamics involving our relationship -- though of course I want him to have his time with his mom. How do I explain this in a better way than I am doing now? I have been in counseling and thought

I received excellent advice, but I haven't made any progress in the situation. -- Am I Doing It Right?

Dear AMIDIR: This isn't a matter of your needing to explain things differently; it's a matter of his needing to listen. You've already tried communicating clearly, calmly and directly with him about your feelings, multiple times. You've seen a therapist about the issue. You've adjusted your expectations and made compromises. Meanwhile, all he's made are excuses.

Ask him to go to couples counseling to work through this (admittedly thorny) issue. If he values your relationship, he'll do whatever he can to make it work. Otherwise, I'd recommend taking

some time and space for yourself -- because if you're the only one fighting for the relationship, what are you really fighting for?

Dear Annie: "Still Daddy's Little Girl" implied that the lack of a high school diploma makes her newly laid-off father less employable. You mentioned several ways she could help her father get another job, but you did not mention helping him get his GED diploma. It's never too late to get a GED diploma, and doing so can be a huge boost to one's self-esteem and employability. -- Karen H.

Dear Karen H.: Great point. It's never too late to get your GED diploma.

Visit <https://ged.com> for more information.

Increase in liver enzymes often linked to fatty liver disease

Dear Doctor: I recently had blood work done, and now my doctor says my liver enzymes are too high. How can I lower them? I have no symptoms, so I was surprised. I have never consumed alcoholic beverages,

nor smoked. I am trying to lose some weight. I do frequently take ibuprofen for arthritis.

Dear Reader: I am not certain which of your liver enzymes are elevated, but the ones most often tested are AST (aspartate aminotransferase) and ALT (alanine aminotransferase). These enzymes are important for enzymatic reactions in the liver, but they are also a marker for liver inflammation and injury. We'll start with those.

An obvious cause for liver enzyme elevation is alcohol, which directly damages the cells of the liver. In such circumstances, AST is more elevated than ALT. But, as you said, you don't drink. Other possible causes include chronic infection with

hepatitis B or C, or a genetic disorder called hemochromatosis, which leads to iron deposits in the liver. Tests for hepatitis infection and for iron and ferritin (a protein containing iron) levels can help diagnose or rule out these conditions.

Many medications can inflame the liver, such as statins for lowering cholesterol. Stopping the statin is often necessary to see if the liver enzymes come back down to normal. As for ibuprofen, it and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, rarely cause liver inflammation, but acetaminophen (Tylenol) does, especially at high doses (more than 4,000 milligrams per day). But again, the only way to determine a connection is to stop the medication and see if the enzymes return to normal.

Heart failure can be linked to liver enzyme elevation, as can cancers of the liver and cancers that metastasize to the liver. These conditions can be diagnosed through imaging procedures such as ultrasound and CT. Autoimmune conditions are a possibility as well; these are better diagnosed with specific blood tests.

But after ruling out these conditions, the most likely cause of liver enzyme elevation is non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, the most common liver disorder in the United States.

A 2017 study of 6,000 adult men and women estimated the prevalence of fatty liver in the United States around 30 percent. The rise of this disease correlates with the rise of obesity and diabetes.

To diagnose fatty liver, you must rule out other causes for liver disease, with the first being alcohol consumption. After that, an ultrasound of the liver is a sensitive and simple way to diagnose the condition. An MRI, although costlier, is also a good test to diagnose the disease. Rarely, a liver biopsy is necessary to diagnose and evaluate the extent of fatty liver.

The best treatment for this condition is

weight loss. Studies have shown significant improvements due to weight loss among those with fatty liver. To decrease both blood sugar and the storage of fat, choose a diet that is low in sugars and simple carbohydrates.

Eliminating sweets, sodas and juices would be a good start. If you're overweight or obese, try for a gradual weight loss of 1 to 2 pounds per week. Although you don't drink alcohol, those who do -- and who have elevated liver enzymes or fatty liver -- should give it up.

With a good diet and exercise, your liver enzymes should start to decline. But make sure to monitor them to ensure that's the case.



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BY PHILLIP ADLER

BRIDGE

John Sterling, a 19th-century Scottish author, said, "Colors answer feeling in

		North	05-21-18
		♠ J 10 9 7 5 3	
		♥ J 10 8 5	
		♦ K J	
		♣ 3	
West		East	
♠ K Q 8		♠ A	
♥ Q 4 3 2		♥ —	
♦ Q 7		♦ 10 9 8 6 4 3 2	
♣ J 9 8 6		♣ K 7 5 4 2	
		South	
		♠ 6 4 2	
		♥ A K 9 7 6	
		♦ A 5	
		♣ A Q 10	
Dealer: South			
Vulnerable: North-South			
South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	2♥	??
Opening lead: ??			

man; shapes answer thought; and motion answers will."

Playing cards usually have two colors; bridge hands have shape (distribution); and the motions while playing those cards will answer the question of the contract's outcome.

In today's deal, South opens one heart. West passes, and North raises to two hearts. First, do you agree with that? Second, what should East do now? Third, if South ends in four hearts, what is West's killing opening lead?

This deal was played 15 times at Bridge Base Online. First, North should bid four hearts. Who knows who can make what? A dozen times, East passed over two hearts, South jumped to game, and it was passed out. West had only one lethal lead: the spade eight. Surprise, surprise -- no one found that. After the diamond-queen lead, South

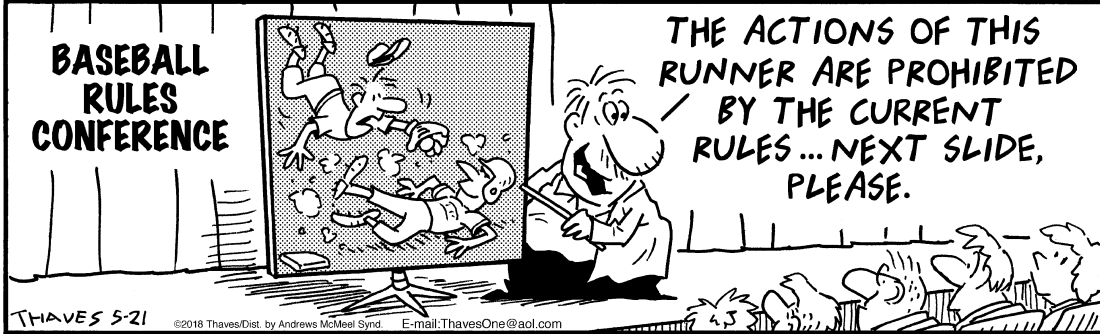
won on the board, played a club to his ace, ruffed a club, led a trump to hand, cashed the diamond ace, ruffed the club queen and played a spade. East had to concede a ruff-and-sluff on which a spade loser evaporated. South lost two spades and one heart.

A single South opened one no-trump, an underbid. North transferred into four spades. In theory, again the only killing lead was the spade eight; but after the diamond-queen start, declarer understandably lost three spades and one heart.

At two tables, East jumped to four no-trump to show at least 5-5 in the minors, a reasonable gamble. West retreated to five clubs, and South doubled. With careful play, West lost two diamonds and two clubs for minus 300 and a great result.

FRANK AND ERNEST

BOB THAVES



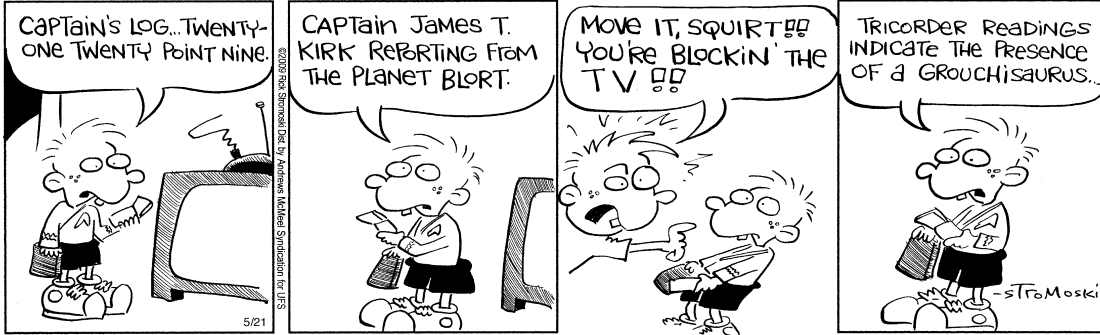
BIG NATE

LINCOLN PEIRCE



SOUP TO NUTS

HOWIE SCHMEIDER



THE BORN LOSER

ART AND CHIP SANSOM



ALLEY OOP

DAVE GRAUE



SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

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

SOLUTION TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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

HOW TO PLAY:

Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

BIL KEANE

