

ANSWERS

by rachel ewy

When I was six years old, I told my mother I wanted an ice cream cone.

“Ask Mister Eight,” she said.

Signs point to yes.

I had an ice cream cone.

When I was fifteen I wanted to get my learner’s permit.

My reply is no.

I never learned to drive.

My little sister asked if my dad was ever going to come back from vacation.

Ask again later. Better not tell you now. Outlook not so good.

I think he lives in Bermuda now - I haven’t asked.

Did you know that it takes, on average, seventy-two outcomes for all twenty Magic 8 Ball answers to appear to you at least once?

My friends told me I was crazy.

Like the time I got the job offer. I wanted it so badly. I prepped for weeks for the interview. First thing I did after they offered me the position was ask Mister Eight if I should take it.

My sources say no.

The key is to accept the outcome without emotion. Don’t second-guess the magic. If you can’t trust the universe to tell you what’s right, then what else is there?

My friends laughed at me, call me “crazy eights”. They were especially vocal about the keychain-sized 8 Ball I carry with me for emergencies, the unanticipated choices that pop up without warning.

Those same “friends” ultimately told me I had to choose between them and the ball.

My sister stopped talking me 15 years ago, but *I may rely on* our relationship being mended in the future.

I trust Mister Eight, he knows what’s best for me.

He was honest with my mother - told her not to count on Dad coming back. So she remarried as soon as she met an M8-approved candidate. Johan is an artist, accent on the “ist.” Mom says she’s not worried that he doesn’t have an income, it’s *very doubtful* their money troubles will last much longer.

Today my alarm didn’t go off. There must have been a power outage during the night because I woke to a blinking digital 12:00.

I scrambled out of bed, already late for work. The phone rang as I was ironing my apron. I spun around, tripping over a chair as I ran to answer it, rapidly formulating an excuse for my tardiness.

I saw it happen before it actually did. Even so, there was nothing I could do to stop it. I watched helplessly as my flailing arm tried desperately to halt my fall, but instead knocked my Magic 8 Ball from the table. 28 years of answers soared through the air and landed with a resounding crack on my linoleum floor.

Spherical black halves rolled across the floor and blue liquid gushed from a shattered plastic tube. I walked toward the mess in a daze, unable to process the scene. Bending over, I grasped the twenty-sided die that had navigated my life for decades. Never wavering, always steady.

Was Mister Eight telling me I was ready to face my future alone? I could go immediately to the store and buy a new one, or I could quit my job and take control of my life, damn the consequences. But how to decide?

I rolled the dice.