

(U) Ask Zelda!: Bored to Tears

FROM: "Zelda," Dispenser of Advice on Workplace Issues

Run Date: 07/08/2014

Approved for Release by NSA on 09-20-2017, FOIA Case # 81057

*(U) The below column is unclassified in its entirety.*

Dear Zelda,

After over a year in my current job I have found that my position is excessive. I have been given a workload, but it is fairly quickly finished and I would like more work. At first, I would go to my supervisor and coworkers for more work but generally I have only gotten small tasks to keep me occupied for a couple hours. In the past year, I have been assigned as a helper for everyone's work to the point I am not sure what work my coworkers are even doing to fill their day sometimes. Even with being a helper I feel writing this letter will be the most I can possibly be productive with my day today. When confronted it appears my supervisor and coworkers are oblivious to this issue. Eventually my 2 year probationary period will be up and I could find a more productive job, but how do I not waste tax dollars in the mean time?

Sincerely,

Trying to do the right thing

Dear Do the Right Thing,

There's nothing worse than being bored at work -- it makes the day pass so slowly!

Since you have already been in your current job for a year, you might be able to apply for a waiver to be released from your current assignment, if your supervisor agrees your position is superfluous. Make an appointment with him to discuss it.

If your supervisor does not agree to the waiver and doesn't give you additional duties to fill your time productively, now would be a good time to work on self-development. Figure out what you might like to do next at the Agency and position yourself for that job. Take a class or two. Volunteer to be your organization's representative to a working group, to broaden your horizons and gain some diversity exposure. Join one of the Agency's **ERGs**. If your boss won't release you, maybe he'll agree to a short-term detail. It couldn't hurt to ask. Learn about other organizations and mission areas by researching them on NSANet. Shadow someone in another office to see if you'd like to work there, once your 2-year probation is up. Offer to organize your office's records (see **Records Management website**) and archive things that are not needed. Look around and see what needs to be done, then volunteer to do it. Not only will your initiative reflect well on you, it's often the additional duties outside of your job description that lead to new opportunities or get you recognized with a cash award.

I'll leave you with one parting thought regarding your comment that "writing this letter will be the most I can possibly be productive with my day." If it makes you feel any better, there are probably quite a few people out there in *SIDtoday* reader land who are in a similar situation. By writing in, you may have helped numerous employees become more productive! And as a taxpayer, that should feel good.

Best of luck to you,

(U) NOTE from the editor: After this article was published, someone created a Tapioca pebble to

encourage employees to supply more suggestions for "Trying to do the right thing." Here's a link to the pebble, "**What to Do When You're Bored to Tears.**"

(U) Looking for some of the older "Ask Zelda" columns? They are filed away in the archives under the "**Ask Zelda! 2010**" and "**Ask Zelda! 2011**" and "**Ask Zelda! 2012**" and "**Ask Zelda! 2013**" series. Also, if you'd like to submit a question of your own to Zelda, just use the "comments/suggestions about this article" button below to send it in.

(U//~~FOUO~~) *SIDtoday is a forum for open communications. The views expressed in articles are those of the person(s) or organization listed in the **byline**; they are not necessarily the official, corporate stance of the SIGINT Directorate (messages from SID leadership excluded).*
