

(U) Ask Zelda!: Not My Problem

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

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

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Dear Zelda,

What should one employee do, if anything, when she sees that others are excluding another employee (who isn't assertive enough to speak up for herself) from receiving information about a process in which they ALL are necessary contributors? I see it as "bullying" or being in a "clique" not to be collegial (the "bully-ers" are "shooting themselves--and our organization--in the foot," as I see it), but since I'm not in the process myself, I worry that it's not my place to

intercede.

-- Not My Problem

Dear NMP,

Not your problem? Tell Angelina Jolie that malnutrition in Africa is not her problem. Tell Richard Gere that human rights in Tibet is none of his business. When it comes to righting wrongs in this world, I feel it's everyone's place to intercede. Of course, the manner in which you do so makes all the difference.

As you have undoubtedly heard, bullying is an issue our leadership currently has on its radar. If this is truly an example of bullying (and it sounds like it might be), you should notify your supervisor. It is his job to ensure the workplace is harassment-free.

If you were part of the process, I would encourage you to speak up right away. Remind the cliquish ones that the organization needs everyone's input in order for the process to run optimally. Don't accuse, but point out the mission impact of their actions in a non-threatening way. If you are the one being excluded, you should definitely do this for yourself, even if it makes you uncomfortable.

Bullying is bad for morale, decreases productivity, increases absenteeism, and may even increase employee turnover.* Making the organization work more smoothly is everyone's responsibility. Go ahead and get involved.

Zelda's Footnote:

* See [this blog post](#) or the [EEOD website](#) for additional information on bullying.

Editor's Footnotes:

1. Both **Angelina Jolie** and **Richard Gere** have received their share of tabloid headlines, but both are very involved in humanitarian causes. They (and others) have been known to use their celebrity status to gain attention for their causes.

2. Another resource : EOD has been sponsoring "**Talk Tuesdays**" Tributary Events on Tapioca, which are dedicated to the discussion of bullying. The transcript of the first event can be found **HERE**. For the transcript of the second one, click **HERE**.

(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.

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