

(U) "Ask Zelda!": Zelda Tackles a Tackler

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

Run Date: 07/02/2012

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



Dear Zelda,

What is the correct hallway etiquette and how do we teach it to the people who work here? Just yesterday I was walking down the hallway in OPS1 and was approached by the "pack." Stretched five across, the end person literally ran into me and knocked me into the wall. Since no apology ensued, I guess they didn't notice the 200 lb. woman they shoved out of the way. Almost as bad are the folks who block 1/2 to 3/4 of the hallway or a hall intersection doorway to discuss what they did over the weekend. Obviously the strategically placed seating is not working. Perhaps we can require

a class on common courtesy?

-- the Invisible Woman

Dear Invisible,

A required class on common courtesy would be a timely addition to NSA's "Civility Matters" campaign; but with the amount of mandatory training already levied on the workforce, I doubt it will come to pass.

I have noticed an increase in what I think of as "lane hijacking" -- whether it's taking up more than one's share of a hallway, blocking an entrance, or (my personal pet peeve) invading my space on a sidewalk or bike path. In the case of speeding bikers cutting into the oncoming pedestrian lane, this can even be quite dangerous! And usually it's due to groups of people so engrossed in socializing that they are seemingly unaware of their surroundings and don't realize they're about to plow into someone.

The Rules

For the record, the rules of hallway/sidewalk/bike path usage are the same as the rules of the road in the U.S.: **keep to the right** and **stay on your half** of the thoroughfare. If the hall is clear, it's fine to walk several across; but when someone is coming in the other direction, please drop back behind your companion(s) to allow the others to pass. Imagine a line down the middle of the hall/sidewalk, and keep to your side.

There is no excuse for running into someone and knocking them into the wall or off the sidewalk into the road... and **especially** for not apologizing, even if you were an offensive tackle in high school.

When carrying on a conversation with friends or colleagues while walking somewhere, be aware of your surroundings. If you are "over the line," step behind the others in your group well before you come abreast of the oncoming foot traffic. Get out of doorways or bottleneck positions if you must

congregate to discuss something. As the Invisible Woman pointed out, we have lovely new IKEA-style furniture in many of the common areas, just waiting for groups to plop down and have a discussion.

The Fix

Feeling invisible? Tired of being pushed around? You may be tempted to give lane hijackers a hip check into the bushes. Maybe if they're staring up at you from a hydrangea, they'll notice you. But then you'd be guilty of uncivil behavior, yourself.

Instead, you could try becoming visible to them by engaging the person about to run you down in conversation. Consider asking him the time or some other simple question to get him to notice you're there... or just call "heads up!"

My personal solution when I see an offensive line coming toward me is to simply stop in my tracks and brace myself. I have found that if I stand still, "the pack" manages to avoid me. I believe this has something to do with the fact that if you are moving, they expect **you** to get out of **their** way; but if you are stationary, like a tree, they know they have to go around you. Or, as in basketball, if someone is standing still and you plow into him, YOU are at fault. Now, if we could just get hall monitors at work to call a foul and assign a penalty...

Parting Thought

I hope one of these tips helps you shed your cloak of invisibility; otherwise, you could always single-handedly revive the 1980's trend of wearing massive shoulder pads, in an effort to protect yourself from tacklers.

Zelda

*Note to Pee-turbed: Regarding the NSA fragrance policy, you might try directing your question to **Disability Affairs**. (Zelda does not interpret policy.) Perhaps D64 can work with I&L to fix the issue you mentioned.*
