

6 Anointed Ways to Set the Boundaries You Need in the Workplace

In light of all the recent allegations of sexual misconduct in various professions, it is my hope that I can help define the boundaries of appropriate conduct and prevent false accusations.

Many years ago, I betrayed my husband with a coworker, so I'm an expert on workplace temptation. Once, the most common type of office infidelity was between male bosses and females who were lower-ranking employees, but that's changed in the last 10 years. With more and more women working, the most common office affair is between coworkers. Jake, the man I had the affair with, was not my boss; we were both sales reps—equals.

Coworkers sometimes work on projects or solve problems together, and the resulting closeness can build teamwork, but it can also build a feeling of intimacy. If you feel an attraction to someone in your office, consider a transfer to a different department, a different position, or maybe you should quit. No job is more valuable than your marriage. I knew that I could not continue to work with Jake without being tempted, so I left the best job I'd ever had.

Be honest with yourself. If you're dressing to please someone at work or lingering in the parking lot hoping that person will ask you to lunch, stop now, before you've gone too far. If you're in doubt as to what conduct is inappropriate, ask yourself, *Would I do this in front of my spouse?* And if you're still not sure, ask yourself, *Would I do it in front of the Lord?* (You are, you know.) Here is a simple rule to keep you on the straight and narrow: If you'd have to hide it or lie about it—don't do it!

My relationship with Jake started innocently. I noticed that he laughed at the same things I laughed at, and he noticed that we both liked similar music, so we started to sit together in the lunchroom. We were just friends ... until we weren't.

I remember the first time we went out of the friendship zone and into the danger zone. We were sitting next to each other at a sales meeting when his leg brushed up against mine. I felt a spark at the contact point and was a bit disappointed when he pulled away. A few minutes later, he shifted slightly in his chair and his leg, from knee to thigh, pressed gently against mine. I liked it, and I didn't pull away.

I should have. And because I didn't, I sent him a signal that I was unguarded. We both began to look for excuses to be together. If I'd pulled away and not responded to his flirtations, I would have avoided the biggest regret of my life.

Many companies have codes of conduct that are safeguards against the temptations of emotional or physical affairs with coworkers. Here are some suggestions to keep you out of the danger zone:

1. People of the opposite sex should not ride in a car together without a third-party present. (This also protects against false accusations.)
2. Don't make personal phone calls to another employee of the opposite sex. Keep the conversation business oriented. As for emails and texts, they should also be about job-related topics. Keep personal comments minimal and avoid flirtatious or suggestive comments. Also, give your mate your phone passcode and permission to look at your phone. (You should also have access to your spouse's phone.)
3. Don't have lunch with the same person every day. Move

around the lunchroom, and if you go out to a restaurant, go in a group.

4. Talk about your spouse positively, making it clear that you're married and intend to stay that way.
5. Be careful not to make any lingering eye contact.
6. The only appropriate touch between business associates of the opposite sex is a handshake. Lingering hugs can be seen as sensual, so be cautious if you are a hugger.

The best defense against an office affair is a healthy marriage. Your marriage could be an excellent example to other married coworkers if you stand strong. So be bold and fearless when you're defending your marriage.

Affairs begin in many ways and for many reasons, so we must be always on guard for the slightest hint of temptation because hints turn into flirtations, flirtations turn into attractions, attractions turn into affairs and affairs turn into disasters. First Corinthians 10:13 says that God will always provide a way of escape, but we must make a decision to run toward the door.

When you're guarding your marriage, you're not guarding just your spouse, but guarding yourself too. I rationalized my way into a boatload of trouble because I thought, *The rules don't apply to me. I've been to Bible college, I'm smart, I have self-control and I can stop before it gets too far.* All lies! I eventually came to my senses and miraculously, my husband forgave me, and we began to rebuild with safeguards firmly in place. I'm thrilled to tell you we are whole and healed.
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