

It's time ... to share your experience

WHEN YOUR JUDGMENT SAYS "DO SOMETHING"

– Joe

“Whether online, in the grocery store or at the beach during vacation, I often see situations where I feel someone should do something. It may be because I am a social worker by training. And I have learned over the years that making these decisions about what to do is very tough - I may need to do something and yet it might be wrong because of my perception or my judgment.

I can think of many situations over my career, but one I remember involved a young woman named Kate.* She was only 22 when she started to work for me, but she was probably the most competent employee I ever supervised. I hired her as a temp, but took on a full time responsibility almost immediately. She had an incredible work ethic with a world view that saw the big picture but was able to pick up the details. I loved working with her and have tremendous respect for her.

Soon after she was hired, Eric* came into our office. Eric is single, in his mid 40s and has a reputation for bringing young women gifts, asking them out, pushing for dates. So, when Eric came into the work area to give Kate a can of sardines, I felt I had to step into the situation. I let Eric know that our facility developed a policy that employees don't give gifts. Eric immediately bristled at my comment and said that a can of sardines is hardly a gift. Although he tried to tell me to mind my own business, I let him know that Kate was someone I supervised and that it was my place to let him know it was not appropriate.

It was a quick judgment call and while Kate never said anything to me about it at the time, my boss noticed what I had done. My boss then thanked me for helping to keep the work environment focused on work and for creating a safe place to work. I know it seems like a small thing to bring up, but I do feel it is so important to always set a tone of respect.”

*Some names and identifying facts have been changed to protect individual identities