

How Do we Make the World a Better Place: Gossip–The Devil’s Radio



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Gossip remains the mainstay of social media, sewing clubs and emails worldwide. Humans love talking about someone else more than the weather. They choose rumor, tattle-tales, speculation and allegation over facts, truth and reality.

Gossip may be called “The devil’s radio” for lack of a better metaphor. You’ve heard, “The devil is in the details...the devil made me do it.” We somehow use the “devil” to sidestep our own culpability. Aristotle, Socrates and Kant realized that the “devil” in all of human foibles remains our own choices.

Let’s define gossip:

- ◆ It reveals passive aggressive behavior
- ◆ It serves as social grooming
- ◆ Ironically, it builds a sense of community with shared interests with those who partake
- ◆ It reinforces personal bias
- ◆ It provides person-to-person dissemination of truths, lies and bias

In one term, it may be understood as “backbiting” or eating the flesh of another.

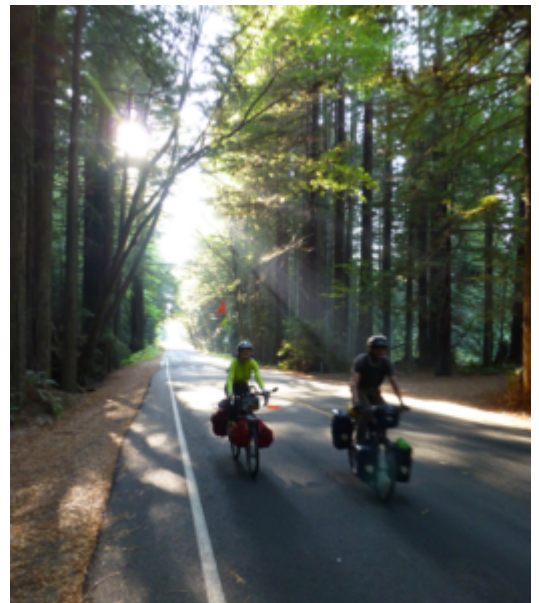
When it happens in the office realm or even in social groups,

it causes stressful problems for victims and negative consequences for everyone:

- ◆ Erosion of trust and morale
- ◆ Anxiety among employees or friends
- ◆ One statement may become hyperbole after passed around a few times
- ◆ Gossip causes divisions among those who like a person and others who despise that person
- ◆ It hurts others' feelings
- ◆ When acid environment pervades a workplace or group, healthy people evacuate

What does this information have to do with you? Do you see yourself in the definitions of gossipers? How does it feel? Have you ever been the victim of gossip?

Years ago, I gossiped to myself with judgments of other peoples' financial condition such as a beggar on the streets of my city. I made comments to myself as to the condition of another person's obesity. I muttered comments to myself as to a stranger's garb, as if it made any difference to the world or to me. I look back on it as passive-aggressive gossip. At the minimum, I only hurt myself with my



negative "thoughts" that created negative mental and body frequencies that harmed my balance as a human being.

Along my life path, I heard many a "rumor" started by someone where I taught school. I watched teenagers create rumors to ruin a girl's reputation. I watched how bullies made a mockery of another person.

Along my journey, I discovered that self-actualized people,

people with passion and a path toward their self-chosen destiny—eschew silly drama comments about anyone else. They live and let live.

However, if you find yourself in the midst of such verbal abuse, you may engage a few actions:

- ◆ You lead by your examples of word and thought. You speak well of people, or, if you possess issues with them, you simply remain silent.
- ◆ If a gossip continues his or her “anger” toward someone, you might become the bold one to confront such behavior.
- ◆ Choose not to be drawn into such actions.
- ◆ Ask questions rather than condemn. Allow gossipers their moment, yet firmly educate them to their highest and best.
- ◆ Usually, a gossip complains about a person or situation. You may be the light that dissolves the darkness by offering solutions.
- ◆ Some gossipers are downright vicious. It’s best to simply avoid them, walk away, and/or choose the high road of forgiveness.

When confronting or dealing with small mindedness or a toxic environment, whether at the office or at home, the key remains openness, hearing all sides and an appreciation of all perspectives. Once you move issues into the open, many people step to the positive side of the equation.

In the end, you vanquish the “devil’s radio” while you open lines of communication for better understanding, greater appreciation for all involved and a sense of community. We all want to be accepted, feel heard and finally, appreciated.

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