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# 10 Highly Effective Ways To Silence Workplace Gossip

07/07/2016 11:42 am ET | Updated Jul 07, 2016



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## H 10 Highly Effective Ways To Silence Workplace Gossip



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Imagine you walk into your office and see colleagues chatting but then when they see you, they hush. Or maybe you notice people glancing at each other when you walk in. Both these behaviors clearly suggest that you're the subject of gossip and the information about you is false or negative while you are entirely innocent. Being in this situation doesn't feel good and it might even make you feel highly anxious, insecure, and unsure about where to turn. Gossip can also have a negative impact on the morale of the office, people will be distracted, productivity may suffer, turnover rates might be high, and there may be some serious issues around harassment.

Believe it or not, there can be an upside to gossip. For example, people might be excited about a new product launch and there may be chatter about it. There may also be talk amongst colleagues about possible promotions, mergers, and raises. These are positive and can be a pleasant, even an exciting distraction from mundane daily work tasks.

**It's important to make a distinction between positive and negative**

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**gossip though. If it's the latter, and you're the subject of it, then here's what you should do:**

- **Calm yourself down.** Addressing gossip when you're upset and emotions are running high will not yield the best results. Take some deep breaths, call a friend or significant other, gather facts, and try to relax.
- **Confront the gossiper.** Present the information you have and gently ask the person to explain it.
- **Watch your language.** Using the word "gossip" is negative and inflammatory and might fuel the situation. Instead suggest that there's "misinformation" out there and ask for clarification.
- **Invite the suspected gossiper or gossipers to go to you with any questions they may have or if you can help to clarify any information.** This is a good way to both put people on notice and let them know you're aware of their gossiping and also to address whatever the situation is — it shows you're not shying away from it or hiding anything.

- **Use humor.** If need be, use it to add some levity to what might be a tense situation. For example, if there are rumors about an improper relationship, you

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- **Consult human resources.** Ultimately the human resources department creates and enforces company policies and most include a statement about gossip. Enlist their help and know they are there to support you and limit liability.

**If you are a manager and suspect gossip in the workplace, here's what to do:**

- **Meet with the alleged perpetrator.** Do this in confidence and not in view of other colleagues. That means the meeting should occur in a private office (not a conference room) because that could spark more rumors and gossip.
- **Educate the person(s).** Review with the employee what gossip is, how it impacts people and the overall department, and the company's policy. Also talk to the person about the ramifications of such talk and what will happen if he or she continues.
- **Meet with the department or team to address gossip.** Make it part of a larger, perhaps regularly scheduled meeting. This will lessen the drama around it. Review the differences between positive and negative gossip and remind people to follow company policy. Encourage positive gossip.
- **Model desired behavior.** As a manager, make sure you're not guilty of talking about people behind their backs. Rather, be professional, keep any water cooler discussions clean and free of any sensitive topics.

So next time you suspect gossip at your workplace, rather than fearing it, face it. Change the dynamic and take charge of the situation. Anything short of that will only provide fertile ground for the gossip to continue and possibly even evolve into bullying.

For more tips on living fearlessly check out my book [Be Fearless: Change](#)



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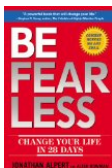
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