

“My friends and I have a problem with gossiping. What can I do to stop and help them stop?”

You can overcome gossiping by following the advice in *For the Strength of Youth* on overcoming swearing: “Help others around you use clean language by your example and by good-naturedly encouraging them to choose other words. Politely walk away or change the subject when others around you use bad language.

“If you have developed the habit of swearing [or gossiping], you can break it. Begin by making a decision to change. Pray for help. If you start to use words you know are wrong, keep quiet or say what you have to say in a different way.”

The pamphlet also explains why it’s important to speak well of others: “Speak kindly and positively about others so you can fulfill the Lord’s commandment to love one another. When you use good language, you invite the Spirit to be with you” (“Language” [2001], 22–23).

Being kind in your communication is Christlike and will help you have better relationships and feel better about yourself. **NE**



The Golden Rule

Gossiping happens all around us every day, and it is extremely hurtful. It may seem cool to spread “the latest news” to your friends, but think about the person you are talking about. Would you say what you are saying if he or she was there? Did the person say you could tell people? Think about how you would feel if someone was gossiping about you. “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (3 Nephi 14:12). If your friends are gossiping, nicely change the subject.

Jessica J., 16, Arizona, USA



Medicine to Cure Gossip

There are three groups involved in gossip: ourselves, those who listen, and the people we talk about. Make a commitment to stop gossiping, and then do it. Here is some medicine to cure the gossip disease: (1) Change the topic when your friends start gossiping. (2) Keep quiet so they don’t have people to talk to. (3) Tell them frankly to “speak not evil one of another” (James 4:11).

But A., 22, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

NEXT QUESTION

"In my family I am the youngest by many years. I always feel left out of my siblings' activities and conversations. What can I do to improve our relationship?"

Send your answer by November 15, 2008, to:

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POISONS TO THE SOUL



"Let us avoid evil speaking; let us avoid slander and gossip. These are poisons to the soul to those who indulge. Evil speaking injures the reviler more than the reviled."

President David O. McKay (1873–1970), in Conference Report, Apr. 1969, 96.



Avoid Negative Comments

Gossip has destructive power and can wound people's feelings. When we gossip, we open the door for the adversary to destroy someone's reputation. To overcome this bad habit, any negative comments about someone's life should be avoided. When we hear such things, whether they are true or not, we should try to stop them. If they continue anyway, we should leave (see Matthew 12:36).

We can help our friends by counseling them never to participate in such conversations and exhort them, as members of the Church and faithful followers of Christ, always to seek to defend truth and righteousness, always to be an example and praise others (see Articles of Faith 1:13).

Ismael S., 18, São Paulo, Brazil

Think on These Things

To avoid gossiping, we can memorize a scripture like Leviticus 19:18 that teaches us to love our neighbors as ourselves and recite it in our minds every time we're about to start gossiping. We can also memorize a song like "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus" (*Children's Songbook*, 78–79) and sing it in our minds. Another idea is to say two good things about the person. In that way you'll forget his or her shortcomings and instead notice the person's goodness.

Rhodora M., 19, Luzon, Philippines



Look for the Good in Others

Gossiping can be hard to overcome. But I think if you remember to love your neighbor, you might think twice before saying a regretful comment. We aren't the ones to judge others. I think looking for good things in people can help, rather than watching for the negative.

Haylee B., 15, Utah, USA

It Takes Courage

Some say that "with our mouths, we build walls between ourselves and our loved ones." I believe that in order to stop this, we need a great deal of personal and spiritual courage. If we truly understand the gospel, we as members of the Church should not gossip because God has taught us to open our mouths to proclaim the gospel to the entire world, not to criticize or gossip about others.

Vanessa R., 19, Tahiti, French Polynesia

Pray for Guidance

Remember that gossiping can have a deep, lasting impact on others. Try and put yourself in their shoes, and think about how you would feel if others were saying unkind things about you. It is a righteous desire for you to change this habit. The Lord will bless you with strength and a change of heart as you sincerely seek His guidance through prayer.

Brittney H., 12, Utah, USA

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.