

Chalice Community Session

Gossip

(By Kara Sweeney, UU Metro Atlanta North (UUMAN) May 2005)

Opening Words: "If you haven't got anything nice to say about anybody, come sit next to me." Alice Roosevelt Longworth

Check-in

Topic:Gossip

A definition of Gossip: Gossip is both the act of spreading news from person to person, especially rumors or private information, and the news spread through the act of gossiping. While this is one of the oldest and (still) the most common means of spreading and sharing information, it is also notorious for the introduction of errors and other variations into the information thus transmitted. The term also carries implications that the news so transmitted. The term also carries implications that the news so transmitted is of, usually, a personal or trivial nature. [Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gossip]

Gossip is something we all have experience of. It is a form of communication that has been embraced by our cultures, starting in our schoolyards and continuing on to our senior years. Since it is so prevalent in our interactions it must serve a purpose or role. Yet it often causes harm or pain in its execution. As such we openly disparage and proclaim to reject the practice of gossiping. Thus far we do not seem to have found methods to stop gossip or transform it into healthy communication. Perhaps we do not have in inclination or the tools.

Gossip is nature's telephone." Sholom Aleichem (1859-1916) Russian author

"The Puritan's idea of hell is a place where everybody has to mind his own business." Wendell Phillips, attributed

"Whoever gossips to you will gossip about you." Spanish Proverb

"Show me someone who never gossips, and I'll show you someone who isn't interested in people." Barbara Walters

"Gossip needn't be false to be evil - there's a lot of truth that shouldn't be passed around." Frank A. Clark

Questions

- 1) Why do we gossip? What purpose does it serve?
- 2) Is all gossip negative? Can we gossip in a positive way?
- 3) Is gossip something that we can stop? What could we replace it with?

4) Is gossip a necessary part of human interactions?

Check Out

Closing Words: "So live that you wouldn't be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip" Will Rogers (1879-1935) American humorist & writer.

I would add, "Speak of others in such a way that if the person you are speaking of is behind you, you will not be embarrassed."