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Four Ways to Shut Up a Gossip

If you listen to gossip, you are an accomplice to robbery.

Rick Warren says in [*The Purpose Driven Life*](#) that:

Listening to gossip is like accepting stolen property, and it makes you just as guilty of the crime.

If you think that gossip ends when you hear it, even if you don't spread it, you are sadly mistaken. Simply *listening* to a gossip is an act of approval.

This is not a post about not spreading gossip. If you are spreading gossip yourself, I can't help you there other than to say **“grow up and shut up, you big baby!”**

This post is about being a hardcore, militant gossip-stopper. This is about hating gossip like an Auburn fan hates Alabama. This is about shedding your “Mr. Nice Guy” cloak and donning a “Gossip Stops Here” super hero cape.

Here are four ways to put gossip in its rightful place: in the dirt, stomped on, twisted into the ground.

1. Get ready to rumble.

This is no time to be nice. Politeness should not even be a consideration here. Don't be gentle or let them down easy. *Are you gentle and easy with a thief?* These people possess stolen property. They are invading your otherwise pure personal space and filling it with garbage. Don't be soft. It's time to put your foot down. **Hard!**

2. Call them out.

Firmly tell them that what they are doing is wrong and you are absolutely not going to listen to it. They're poisoning your mind and just as you have a right to fight back when someone is bullying you, you have a right to shut a gossip up. It might sound like this: “Joe, before you go any further, I hate gossip. It tears down team unity and really ticks me off. I'm done listening and I hope you're done talking.” That was the *nice* version by the way.

3. Walk away.

Maybe #2 sounds too hard for you. Maybe you're the passive aggressive type and are working up the courage to take a stand. One day you will get there, but for now, just walk away. Literally the moment you hear, "Did you hear what Jim said about Kate?" start walking. This is also a great way to supplement #2. Like Eminem in the movie [8 Mile](#)...call them out, drop the mic and walk away.

4. If you are in a position to do so, institute a no-gossip policy.

This is a pillar of [Entreleadership](#). I love Dave Ramsey's approach to this, and if you can, I highly encourage you to put a no-gossip policy in place.

Here is the no-gossip policy: **No gossiping.**

You get one warning. The second time, you're fired. That is the way to handle a gossip.

As easy as these appear to some, they are frightening to others. It's a lot easier to just listen politely, imply that their message is worth spreading, and then have negative thoughts rattle around in your head all day.

If you really want to stop gossip, you'll get mean about it.

How have you seen gossip poison a culture and how have you stopped it in its tracks?