

Liz Brummond - Just my two cents: The virus spreads

Posted by [Elizabeth Brummond](#) Jul 11, 2016

People worry constantly about computer viruses and hackers. But there is no more a deadly virus than office gossip. It proliferates with little help and can destroy the reputation of the gossiper and the subject of the gossip. It also can destroy friendships and relationships. Someone's reputation and credibility is at stake each time gossip is passed along – whether true or not (the latter is often the case).

What role do you play?



- **The gossip**

If you are the “carrier,” you are viewed as untrustworthy. People will wonder what you may be saying about them. They question your credibility and ability to deal with confidential or proprietary information.

What to do? Don't spread anything but sunshine. Put duct tape over your mouth if needed.

- **The bystander**

Don't encourage bad behavior. By simply taking part in the conversation, you could be thought of as passing the information along, even if you weren't.

What to do? If someone starts a conversation with “Did you hear about so-and-so,” run. Don't even stop to listen or, especially, comment.

YOU DON'T SAY ?





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- **The topic**

Don't give them something to talk about. Keep your behavior professional and personal conversations and information personal. If you find you are a subject, quash it immediately. Go to the person and ask them (nicely) to talk to you directly about anything they hear for verification. Do it in private. This avoids embarrassment – or more gossip.

Of course, some people who thrive on exposing the private and personal information of their colleagues and find something to talk about. A closed-door meeting, a snippet of conversation heard out of context, can become a “secret” that must be aired. Avoid them like the plague.

Because, the reality is they are a plague.