

STOPPING the GOSSIP

"Backbiting quencheth the light of the heart, and extinguisheth the life of the soul." —Bahá'u'lláh



"Sonja always gets an 'A' because she cheats on her tests."

"Leon *must* have painted that graffiti. Who else?"

Why do people say hurtful things? Sometimes, kids feel powerful when they gossip about others. And sometimes kids want attention and will say crazy things to get other kids excited. But for the

people being talked about, gossip can cause sadness and stress—just like any other kind of bullying.

Backbiting can also bite right back. You probably already know you can lose friends if you get a reputation for talking about others. Backbiting hurts our souls, too. Can you recognize backbiting and keep it from spreading?

Do You Have Gossip-Stopping Skills?

Read each situation and choose the most respectful and thoughtful answers.

- In the cafeteria, your friend says, "Don't sit with that new kid. I hear she eats gross food and can't even speak English."*

 - You sit with the new kid, and you get to know each other.
 - You sit with your friend and hold your nose.
 - You tell other friends that the new kid is weird.
- You overhear your mom talking to Jessica's mom. Your mom says, "You're getting a divorce? Oh, no!"*

 - Call all of Jessica's friends with the news.
 - Talk to your parents about how to be helpful to Jessica during this difficult time.
 - Yell, "Sorry about your parents!" at the basketball game.
- When the teacher returns graded tests in Spanish class, Tracy suddenly leaves the room, looking upset.*

 - Tell the kids around you that Tracy is flunking Spanish.
 - When your friend whispers, "What a loser," you agree.
 - Talk to Tracy later, and see if she's feeling okay.
- A note from your friend says, "Did you see Josh's sweater? What a nerd!"*

 - Pass it along to someone else.
 - Add, "And those pants!"
 - Throw it away.
- You get an e-mail saying that a kid who bullies you was caught shoplifting.*

 - Reply immediately, to find out what he stole.
 - Forward the e-mail to all of your friends.
 - Delete the e-mail and don't reply.
- Your brother and his friend are talking in his room, and you hear that his parents are having money problems.*

 - Only tell one person.
 - Make an extra effort to be kind and patient with the friend.
 - Show up at their soccer practice and tell the team.
- You hear on the bus that your neighbor's religion is against all other religions.*

 - Ask your parents to help you learn the facts.
 - Ask your parents if you can move.
 - Warn all the kids in your neighborhood.
- Someone at school rushes over to tell you, "Brian has a crush on Heather, but Heather doesn't like him."*

 - Post the news on your chat room.
 - Tease Heather during recess.
 - Politely say that they are your friends, and you don't want to spread rumors about them.

