

# The Gossip Gates:

*Is it True? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind?*



*"Strong minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events, weak minds discuss people."*

**~Eleanor Roosevelt**

Rumors and gossip can be greatly lessened if, before a person passes on something they have heard or read on social media, they see if the message can pass through three gates: Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind? If the person can't answer "yes" to these three questions, then they should not pass on what they heard or read on social media.

- **Is it True?** Did you witness the event or situation? Did a person directly involved in the situation tell you? Has it been reported by an organization that must verify facts? Were you told in confidence by a person with access to the truth? Are there verifiable documents, images or audio available that records the event or situation?
- **Is it Necessary?** Synonyms for "necessary" might be: appropriate, helpful or urgent. Is the subject you are talking about appropriate to talk about in public? Is it your business? Will passing the information on to someone else be helpful in any way? Is it getting someone out of trouble or in trouble? Is it important that the message be passed on to someone quickly to avoid something negative happening?
- **Is it Kind?** The Golden Rule states, treat others as you would like to be treated. Would your family be proud of you for passing on the message or would you be reprimanded? If the person the rumor or gossip was about could hear you talking, would you pass on the information? If the rumor or gossip was about one of your family members, would you feel good hearing about it in the school halls or reading about it cyber space? Would passing on the rumor or gossip be considered mean spirited?

## **Activity Directions:**

1. Form into small groups of 3-4 people. Discuss the following question.

*Pick a recent time when you have passed on gossip or a rumor in cyber space or through face to face conversation. Share what it was with your partners, and analyze it with the Gossip Gates. Would it pass through the 3 gates? If you had a chance to do it over gain, would you pass it on or not?*

2. What has been your experience in regards to rumors or gossip being spread about you?

3. What are the damaging effects of gossip and rumors on people's lives and relationships?

4. Why is it difficult to resist the temptation to pass on gossip and rumors?