

# Mind Poison: Gossip

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A common expression often heard is that human beings only use a tiny percentage of their brains and the greater portion goes untapped. This percentage of utilized brain capacity is said to be around ten-percent while ninety-percent remains unexplored. With these insights before us, one can only imagine the great potential of the human race.

As exciting as it is to recognize the great untapped resources of the mind, it is equally disturbing to discover how wasteful we are in our thinking. The thoughts you think control your greater outcome. You are not the victim of anything; you are the conscious creator of your reality. Your thoughts are the source of that creation. The irony of our choosing is that even though we have the great capacity to use our minds to achieve magnificent creations, we often sabotage our lives when we remain entrenched in the world of gossip. The dark world of gossip is nothing more than poison for your mind.

Gossip flourishes in this modern age. Yes, it is true, people have always gossiped. In the ages past, neighbors would gather to gossip about another neighbor. Special clubs of men and women would gather to gossip about current members or outsiders. Newspapers and periodicals would publish reports that appeared to look like news stories but were actually a well-hidden gossip monologue. Special reporters were assigned to cover big celebrity stories and those stories were reported as headline news events.

Gossip is about becoming more interested in someone else's life than your own. It is about talking about seemingly insignificant details that matter very little. A common trait of gossip is wanting to feel good about yourself by diminishing someone else. You can boost yourself up by putting someone else down. Gossip is a sense of wanting others to fail. There is very little intimacy when it comes to gossip. Gossip thrives in a "dumbed" down culture that seeks constant stimulation.

The world of gossip has significantly elevated in the last several years. Due to the rise in the electronic and technology fields, gossip has reached an epidemic level. We have become so bombarded with gossip that we have become addicted to it. We now crave it like a heroin addict craves heroin or an alcoholic who is unable to pass up a liquor store. Gossip has become so prolific in our culture that we do not even know any different. Just as an alcoholic only knows alcohol as being normal, gossip addicts believe that it is normal to crave more and more gossip. A gossip addict cannot get enough and is seldom satisfied. They take their gossip addiction with them wherever they go. The mind poison continues to take over without much recourse. Is it not time for a gossip intervention?

The gossip culture escalated for many reasons. First, the twenty-four hour a day cable television industry took hold and there were many television stations with an abundance of "air time" that needed to be filled. Producers and broadcasters were dumb-founded in how to fill in all of those hours of television time. Hence, more and more television shows became less and less about scripted formats and

more about "reality" television, where unknown people could instantly become celebrities. We became addicted to watching other people's drama and secretly wishing for them to fail. The gossip culture was born and large audiences became hooked on their favorite gossip television shows. As fans poured in so did the ratings and the money. Gossip began to make lots of money and that propelled it even further into our lives.

Next, television stations merged their news departments with their entertainment divisions. Now it was difficult to separate "hard news" from gossip entertainment. "News anchors" were now reporting celebrity gossip stories as if our lives depended on us knowing this information. The latest celebrity arrest or divorce was reported with the same enthusiasm as a nuclear disaster or an invasion by a foreign enemy. We gobbled it up because our trusted sources of news now told us it was important.

An army of "weak-boundaried" and "get rich quick" paparazzi canvassed the city streets and resorts hunting down whatever pictures they could get of celebrities. "Celebrity sightings" became the new catch-phrase of the day. Loose interpretations of the *First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States* by the judicial system has allowed unscrupulous "photo whores" to steal images of celebrities and ransom them off to the highest tabloid bidder. A culture that believed in ethics would never allow this. Some sacred cultures believe that it is "taboo" to steal the image of another (especially without one's permission or at least without payment). Here it is not only acceptable to steal one's image and manipulate it in whatever manner you like, it is highly encouraged. The public bought these tabloid newspapers and magazines in record numbers as they were fed their daily dose of gossip. The cell phone camera and video turned the "average Joe" into a tabloid whore. Now anyone could chase down a celebrity and sell the stolen image to any "gossip pimping media outlet."

Television shows emerged that claimed to be about "entertainment." Under these misleading banners, gossip was dished out in record numbers. As one show tried to "one-up" the other, some shows stopped pretending to be entertainment at all and blatantly have made a fortune just selling gossip. The ratings continued to climb. Soon morning "talk shows" emerged where a group of women would sit around and gossip about life events. Under the umbrella of offering one's "view," gossip proliferated. The public could not get enough of it. The success of morning gossip shows has caused others to mimic their format. Gossip is now delivered as "talk."

Celebrity experts now emerged with their own television shows that spewed more gossip. Under the premise of "psychological" intervention, one celebrity mental health doctor has made a fortune on family drama gossip. Other celebrity gossipers have made their millions on food gossip, home decorating gossip and party planning gossip.

Traditional institutions have merged with the gossip mongers. *The Academy Awards*, for instance, used to be about the best movie performances and productions. Soon the fashion gossipers came on board and now this grandiose event is more about gossiping about what the women are wearing and who designed

their dresses. Thanks to the fashion gossipers, there is very little movie awards left in the *Academy Awards*.

A common misconception is that only women gossip. The fact is that men gossip just as much as women do. Men can be seen to gossip about sports, politics, finance and many of the same topics women gossip about. In fact, as radio and television have expanded and have demanded more topics to fill their time slots, gossip sports radio and television are more the norm these days. Gossip is cleverly hidden under the disguise of "analysis." To actually call it what it is—*gossip*—would be far too demeaning. "Analysis" sounds more intellectual and certainly more "manly."

The electronic age emerged with bloggers and the explosion of social media. A blogger is nothing more than a "stay-at-home gossip." Blogging has become the everyday man's way of spewing gossip to one's loyal following. As social media unfolded, men, women and children could now receive their daily dose of gossip at any hour of the day. While there might be a few positive benefits to social media, most of the interaction being presented is gossip. Grandma can now receive pictures of her grandchildren and department stores can send out savings coupons. But does one really need to know what you had for breakfast or what color socks you are wearing to school? Observing a teenager gossiping on a cell phone or a computer is about as mystifying as watching a heroin addict stick another needle in his arm. When does the insanity end? When do we stop drugging ourselves on gossip?

We do not need to search in back alleys for our drugs anymore. We are drugged every day when we turn on our cell phones and computers. Any behavior can be as addictive as any drug. When do the gossip treatment centers begin to open their doors and will insurance companies pay the bill? Are you willing to "unlink" yourself, "unfriend" yourself and "untweet" yourself to freedom from gossip? How addicted are you? After all, most of the people in your collection probably aren't really your "friends" anyways.

America used to create things and be at the center of great innovations. How will history remember us? Will we be remembered as the great country that brought positive change to the world or as the culture that used all of its brain power to design more and more ways to feed gossip to its citizens? It is ironic that a social media company can be worth billions of dollars on Wall Street yet our school systems are failing. Where are our priorities?

We are a culture that prides itself on knowing more about the life of a teen pop idol than knowing the capital cities of the world. Has not gossip replaced even baseball as the national past time? In fact, when you attend a sporting event like a baseball game, don't many of the people in the stands have their cell phones glued to their ears while gossiping with another?

Gossiping is about taking someone down and wasting your mind on meaningless thoughts. Are you using your brain power to uplift others and see them in a positive light or are you trying to better yourself by focusing on the failures of others? Gossip is about a negative use of your thoughts.

The potential of the mind is enormous to create spectacular visions. Yet we remain bogged down by gossip and meaningless nonsense that is draining our brain power. By focusing our minds we can make enormous changes in the world.

**Remaining stuck in the petty world of gossip is nothing more than injecting poison into your brain on a daily basis.**

**Your mind has the potential for greatness. Your mind is also capable of mediocrity and sabotage. Just like the fact that there is no redeeming value to being a heroin addict, nothing good comes from gossip addiction either. Are you willing to fertilize your mind for greatness or pollute it for mediocrity?**

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