



**My** first job out of college was a receptionist position at a commercial real estate company. It was an easy job. I answered the phones, sorted faxes and basically talked to clients and employees all day. I loved it. What I wasn't prepared for, though, was the REAL TALK. People would come up to the front desk to get faxes or walk by on their way to another department and just chat. I learned about people's families, their personal lives, their pets...and most importantly I discovered their opinions of other people in the office. People would come to the front desk and gossip. I am still baffled at the amount of information I was given each day from a variety of departments. I remember leaving the office one day thinking that I should get a bonus for being the watercooler at the office and keeping all of the information to myself!

So, what do you do when your co-workers whisper to you about leadership? What do you say when your peers begin to talk about one another...or even talk about clients? Do you look away? Do you nod and smile? What 's the right move? The best way to keep from getting entangled is to make the gossiper stop what they are saying. Distract them. Show them something shiny...or confront the talk directly. Just stop it. You don't want to be a part of the gossip web **at all**.

## The No Gossip Zone: If You Build It, They Will QUIT.

You can set firm boundaries with these "purveyors of negativity" in the office. They may not like the boundaries you set, but they will respect them. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Tell them you are not comfortable talking about their target victim or subject.
2. Change the subject.
3. Tell the person that is spreading the gossip, "Oh my gosh, I am so sad for [victim's name]! I think I will go talk to him/her about it right now. You wanna come? ....aaaand the conversation is now over.



Whatever you do, **DON'T PARTICIPATE**. Don't even nod and smile. It makes you complicit in the game of gossip.

Albert Einstein, one of the greatest minds EVER, said, "*If **A** equals success, then the formula is **A** equals **X** plus **Y** and **Z** with **X** being work, **Y** being play, and **Z** keeping your mouth shut.*" I quite agree.

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