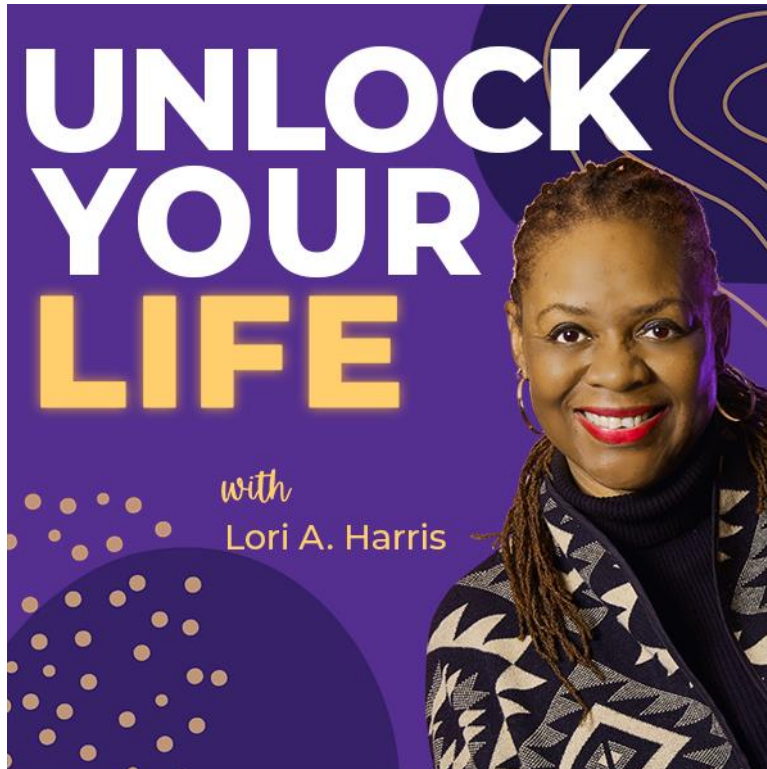


## Ep #34: Eliminate Gossip From Your Life



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Lori A. Harris**

[Unlock Your Life](#) with Lori A. Harris

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I don't care whether you want to be an effective CEO or an effective family member, eliminating gossip as part of your modus operandi is going to be essential to effective leadership. I'm going to define gossip for you and give you some tools for releasing negative energy so that you can get the job done. Let's get going.

Welcome to the *Unlock Your Life* podcast, a podcast for highly successful visionary women who want more out of life. If you feel that ache of unfulfillment in your soul, you're in the right place sis. Join life mastery consultant Lori A. Harris as she teaches you how to stop living for others and finally put yourself first. Let's dive into today's show.

There's something I've noticed in my personality that I really don't like, and it's the propensity to engage in gossip. Now I don't mean gossip in the traditional way that many people would think of it. Saying negative things behind someone's back just to keep a rumor mill going.

Gossip is traditionally defined as any statement made by another person, someone with a negative intent. It can also be a statement made by another that the speaker would be unwilling to share in exactly the same way if that person were in the same room.

Now for me, I've noticed that how gossip shows up in my dialogue is when I allowed myself to become angry or upset. What I will do to manage the energy is to share the information with someone else. It's my way of bringing down steam. So there was a time when if I became very upset, I might cry. Crying didn't mean that I was sad or that I was hurt. Crying could mean that I was very, very angry and I didn't feel as if I was in a safe place or an appropriate place to share that anger. So tears might form in my eyes. It felt literally like releasing steam.

I don't generally feel that way anyway. I don't necessarily need to release steam in that way. Occasionally things will happen in day to day

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experiences that cause me to feel some kind of a way, a way that I don't want to feel. Rather than dealing with the person in the moment, I will hold it in, receive this negative information, interaction, negative comment. Receive it within my body and then feel really uncomfortable.

In the past rather than go direct to the person, I might go and share that information with someone else. Now there have been times when I realize that that's what's going on within my body, and I stop myself from going on and releasing negative energy into an environment because I'm very conscious of who I want to be and how I want to show up. So I might try to distract myself rather than talk about it and release the energy in that way.

It's important that we learn how to manage our energy so that we can show up and be the person that we want to be more times than not. Now, Pema Chödrön is quoted saying, "You are the sky and everything else is the weather." What that reminds me of is if we can learn to sit with our negative emotions, we can be reminded that most likely those negative emotions or experiences are not gonna last forever.

In fact, psychologists and neuroscientists have found from testing people that negative emotions or emotions in general last for about 90 seconds. So if we can remind ourselves that nothing is gonna last forever and if we can sit in the moment with the feeling that we're experiencing, it will pass much like the weather.

So as a leader, it would be lovely and wonderful and it's my aspiration to help my clients become the leaders that they want to be. So I love for my clients to take that step of saying, "I commit to ending gossip and talking directly with the people with whom I have a concern. I encourage others to do the same." So whatever person with whom you have a disagreement or a concern, it's best if you go directly to that person and allow an opportunity for correction or communication to be improved between the parties.

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According to the book *The 15 Commitments of Conscious Leadership* gossip is a key indicator of an unhealthy organizational culture. One of the fastest ways to derail creativity, it takes a lot of mental and emotional energy to engage in stories about others. Energy that could be used more productively for creating win/win situations and solutions and advancing the objectives of the organization.

So why do we gossip? Well, sometimes we want to validate our own feelings, our own behaviors, our own ways of dealing just a situation. We might want to advance our position and make another person wrong. We want to be validated. It sometimes is way of controlling other people. Sometimes we just want to get attention or divert attention away from us.

I once worked in a very large organization where gossip was rampant. In fact, it also served as kind of a hazing exercise. What I learned in that situation, and I have to continue to remind myself. If someone is talking to you about a third party, you can bet that there will come a time when that person will be talking about you to another third party. Going with the golden rule, if you don't want to be talked about, don't talk about other people.

Now this is the month of relationships, of love. We've been talking about what things can we do to improve our ability to relate to other people and to have dialogues and to have relationships. So what I love to encourage myself and my clients to do is not to engage in gossip.

So if I'm tempted to go to another and repeat a situation or describe something that happened between me and a third party, I endeavor, I try, I'm working towards being a person that goes directly to the person. So what's that going to require? It's going to require me to first calm my own nervous system first. To go through my own inquiry about what I know to be true or right and pause me from nursing and rehearsing my victim story within myself.

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I encourage my clients to go direct. Rather than talking to other parties, go directly to the person with whom there is this miscommunication, this perhaps disagreement or this feeling of wrongdoing. Go direct to them. When we go direct, we want to set the intention. We want to set the intention that some good can come out of our communication.

So we're going to seek to understand first rather than wanting to go to be understood. We want to train ourselves to look to the other party and allow ourselves to see them as the divine, as someone that with whom we're in relationship, that we want good for and we see good in.

When we do that as we radiate that out from our own bodies, we can hope to receive it back as we attempt to communicate with them. So when we are in what appears to be a disagreement or a disappointment, we can go directly to the person and communicate with them that we want to talk to them directly. We set the intention that at the end of this communication, it is my hope that we will be closer. Then ultimately we allow ourselves to seek growth.

So we want to first just state the facts. Here's what I see. This is what I see. This is what I feel. This is what I want. We want to communicate. What I see, what I feel, what I want. What I would love. Then we want to ask for some form of cooperation. Can I get buy-in from the other party? This happened. I wish that it hadn't happened. In the future, this is what I would love to receive. Would you be willing to do that for me?

Then fall silent. Fall silent and allow the other person to be heard. It's a beautiful thing if the two parties can agree to give each other a fresh start. Let's get a do over. Can we get a start over? Decide on a fresh start?

What about if you are not the person speaking and someone is speaking to you? This would be a great time for us to practice boundaries. So we might say something like gee Suzy, I understand you're really frustrated about the

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situation with Sam. I would prefer that you speak directly with Sam about the situation rather than discussing it with me. Would you be willing to do that? In that you're cutting off communication in a respectful manner. you're letting Suzy know I don't really want to hear about what Sam did, and it allows you to keep your side of the street clean.

In an organization, if a conversation is happening purely for the purpose of advancing growth then there is a possibility that it's not gossip. How do you know if it's gossip? Well one, do you have a negative intent in the communication? Two, would you be willing to say exactly the same things that you're saying in the way that you're saying them in the presence of the person about whom you're speaking? If you would speak the same way then it's not gossip. If you would not, then it is gossip.

If it is gossip and you need to clean it up, then you need to go through the steps to clean up those things that you've been gossiping about. So you might go directly to Sam and say, "I had a conversation about you. It shouldn't have happened. I discussed the things that happened between the two of us. I was wrong. I was frustrated. This is what I said. It shouldn't have happened, and it won't happen again." Tell the other person that you've been talking about, express your remorse, and then indicate that you're not going to do it in the future.

If you are a person that has been listening to gossip, you can tell the person that has been gossiping, "I intend to talk to Sam about this and then tell Sam I received some information about your situation. I regret receiving it. It shouldn't have happened. In the future, I will aspire to not being a recipient of gossip. I apologize for my part in it, and I won't be doing it again in the future."

So as we work on our communications, we are aspiring to go direct. Go directly to the person with whom we're having a disagreement. Don't make it wrong that you're having a disagreement. Human beings are going to

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make mistakes, have missteps, see it differently, but we don't have to compound it by gossiping. So we're going to go direct to the person. We're going to tell them what we see, felt, or heard and be direct about it.

So that means we're going to state the facts. This is what happened. In state the fact, it's going to be free from any kind of opinion. So rather than putting a judgement on a particular situation, we're just gonna state the facts. If the numbers or percentages are dropping then we talk about the percentages are dropping rather than your team screwed up and didn't do what they needed to do. That's why our percentages are dropping.

So perhaps you feel that your manager has spoken to you in a disrespectful manner. I can give you an example, in fact. I once had a conversation with a judge in open court. That judge had confused me with another lawyer. He started to yell at me because he thought I was the other lawyer.

I paused the conversation and asked the court to stop yelling. I indicated on the record, "May the record reflect that the court is yelling at counsel, and I will not have it. You will not speak to me in that manner. You won't speak to me that way. You wouldn't speak to a child that way. You won't speak to a dog that way. You won't be speaking to me that way. I respect the court. I may not like or like what you're doing, but I respect the fact that you are an officer of the court. You are on the bench, and I respect that. But what I will not tolerate is you speaking to me in a disrespectful manner. I ask that the court lower their voice."

So I wanted to bring the tensions down in the room. Because it didn't matter whether or not he had the right person. What mattered is I want to be spoken to in a respectful manner. That's how I chose to deal with it in that moment. So I identified I am here. I am a professional. I am a member of the court. I want you to speak to me as a professional. At this time, I note for the record that the judge, the court, has raised his voice, is speaking to

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me in an elevated tone, has spittle coming out of their mouth, and has a red face. I'd ask for you to bring your emotions down.

And in fact the court did. Because while I was saying all of this, I was speaking in a very low tone and in a very formal tone. By doing that, it changed the energy in the room and reminded everyone we're not on a football field. We're in a courtroom. There's a way and a decorum that we are supposed to bring to this forum. So that is an example.

When you're having a disagreement about something and you recognize there's a possibility that you might be wrong, but you are still having the feeling. One way to offer preamble to it is this is what happened. The story I'm telling myself is you must not care about me or you don't respect me or whatever it is that you're telling yourself, which recognizes it may not be true. However, it is how I feel. It gives the other person information and it gives room for that not to be the case. You're at least entertaining the notion that you could be wrong.

So when you're having a misstep, a disagreement, you want to go direct. You want to tell the person what you see, feel observe. Then indicate what is it that you would love to have the situation, how you would love to resolve it. Ask for buying. Ask for an agreement. Then fall silent and see if you can get your request met. That's a great way to start and begin to have a fresh start. We want to listen with open ears and an open heart. We want to recognize the divine within the person that we're talking to, and we're going to see to understand first before we want to be understood.

Going to another in that spirit may sew the seeds of a great and beautiful relationship. Don't characterize what is happening between you and this other person as a bad thing or wrong thing. As Thich Nhat Hanh says, "No mud, no lotus." So out of our difficulties, out of the rooms of trouble can come something beautiful. We have to look for it in order to extract it. We have to look for the good in order to find it, nurture it, and bring it forth. T



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