

# 1.

If someone gossips to you,  
they'll gossip about you.

**Think** about it. If someone is willing to say nasty things *to* you about someone else, what makes you think they won't say mean things *about* you to others?

**Gossip** is talking about things that aren't confirmed to be true, don't matter, or aren't any of your business. Gossip usually ends up hurting someone.

**“Did you see the way Amber looked at that new guy today? She's totally into him.”**

How do you know she's totally into him? Did Amber *tell* you this? If not, don't talk about it. Maybe the new guy happened to be standing in front of the clock, and she wanted to know the time.

**“Did you see what Sally was wearing? Her family must shop at the tacky barn!”**

Why does it matter what Sally wears? Does it affect her more substantial qualities like her **personality**, character, or intellect? No, it doesn't. Also, if there were a place called the Tacky Barn selling clothes, I'd be there every day.

**Here's the thing:** Gossip is **easy**. It's not difficult to find fault in people. Everyone's riddled with flaws, including you. As Christians, though, we're supposed to **build up**, not **tear down**.

When a conversation turns toward gossip there's **nothing** wrong with gently calling it out by saying, **“Hey, I'm trying not to gossip. Do you mind if we change the subject? Did you see the new slide opened at the water park? It looks crazy!”**

This is a **polite** way of getting the subject changed and maybe the start of a trip to the water park. If you can't defend a person who is being talked badly about, excuse yourself from the conversation.

If you're around people who constantly tear into others, it may be time to start hanging around a different group of people.

It's also really easy to gossip when someone hurts or offends you. If a brother or sister in Christ upsets you, the Bible tells us to go **directly** to that person and **tell them** they've hurt you. (Do it nicely. Don't scream it in their face.) Give them a chance to apologize, and **be ready to forgive**. It's not easy, but it's **much, much** less hurtful than “venting,” exaggerating, or spreading rumors through gossip. If you need advice on how to handle a situation, go to a **parent, youth pastor, or**

**mentor** and get their perspective. This is different than gossiping about it with your friends.

Sometimes we're so used to gossip it's hard to think of other things to talk about. Good conversation takes effort. It requires **thought, knowledge, and understanding**. Sometimes conversation means saying nothing at all and simply **listening**.

Need some conversation ideas? Start with **asking** about the other person's day. **Tell them** about your day. **Talk about** what's going on in your community. **Talk about God** and what He's doing in your life. Let the conversation go from there! You'll be surprised at how **fun** and **enjoyable** it is.

**Happy conversing!**

*Kristin*



### FROM GOD:

-  "Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies" (Psalm 34:13 NIV).
-  "From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so" (James 3:10 ESV).

### GO AHEAD—ANSWER:

-  Are you guilty of gossip? What makes gossip so easy?
-  Have you ever been hurt by gossip? Why is gossip so hurtful?
-  What are some other things you can talk about besides other people?

### FROM KRISTIN:

*Sometimes the only thing we have in common with someone is what we gossip about. You may need to reevaluate some friendships or find other common ground to talk about. P.S. Go read all of James 3, which talks about taming the tongue.*

### FROM SUSIE:

*I heard Kristin saves her gum and chews it the next day.*

## 2.

*Treat your parents with respect,  
even if you don't think they deserve it.*

It's funny how **smart** parents suddenly become when you get to be around twenty-two years of age. Usually around the time students graduate from **college**, they begin to realize their parents actually know what they're talking about. This is also around the time that your relationship with Mom and Dad begins **transforming** from parent/child to parent/friend. It's an exciting transition. It doesn't happen overnight. And it's usually a **process**. But it often begins around your early to mid-twenties.

### **But what about now?**

Though it may *seem* like your folks don't know what they're talking about, they usually do. Unless you've been hired by the CIA to create a brand-new code that enables you and your friends to leave the house at midnight while your parents are sort of frozen-but-still-conscious and can't move as you walk right past them and take the family car to pick up your friends and head to Dairy Queen even though it's closed but your secret code allows you inside and you make chocolate malts for everyone, fire up the grill, flip some burgers, use a lot of cheese, and come back home and go to bed and the next morning when you see your parents at breakfast and they say, "We know what's happening. We're frozen, and we can't move when it happens, but we know you have a secret code. And guess what! We've cracked the code. You're not going to Dairy Queen anymore until you're forty-six!" In this case, your parents probably really *don't* know what they're talking about because, remember, the CIA are the ones who have hired you to create this code and if they've hired you, you totally know they've protected the code and probably have bodyguards wearing invisible suits protecting you on the way to Dairy Queen and back and there's no way your parents have actually cracked the code but even though they really *don't* know what they're talking about in this particular situation it would still be wise to respect them or else you'll end up writing run-on sentences about ridiculous scenarios and codes that will never exist.

**Right now** is a great time to build on the foundation you and your folks need to have to make the transition from parent/child to parent/friend someday. Let them know you're trustworthy. When you disagree, ask if you can discuss the issue instead of screaming, "You're so unfair! Jasmine's parents let HER bungee

off the Golden Gate Bridge!”

Most parents are **overworked** and underpaid. Do something today to make your mom’s life **easier**. Think of a way you can **encourage** your dad. Clean the house without being asked. Have dinner ready for them tonight. Learn to be a **peacemaker** in your home. And practice love—lots of it.

What does it actually mean to **respect** your parents? **Give** them the benefit of the doubt. Be **obedient** (you’ll be amazed at how far this will get you once you get out into the work world!). **Listen** to them. Be kind.

The more you respect your parents now, the greater your relationship will be when you make the transition!

*Susie*



### FROM GOD:

- ❤️ “My son, keep your father’s command and do not forsake your mother’s teaching” (Proverbs 6:20 niv).
- ❤️ “A fool spurns a parent’s discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence” (Proverbs 15:5 niv).

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### GO AHEAD—ANSWER:

- »→ In what two areas do you and your parents have the most conflict?
- »→ Discuss three things you can do to make the conflict better.
- »→ What are some specific things you can do to show respect to your parents?

### FROM SUSIE:

*Do your parents insist on giving you a curfew, going to church as a family, knowing who your friends are, and praying for you? If so, celebrate! They’re in the process of giving you a strong heritage that will last a lifetime. When you’re twenty-two, you’ll actually thank them.*

### **FROM KRISTIN:**

*Parents have been charged by God to raise their children to love Him and teach them to follow His commands. This is a huge responsibility—so cut them some slack if they seem overbearing or overprotective. You'll understand when you're a parent yourself one day.*