

# SOLUTIONS

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## Gossip in the Workplace

*PSSST.....Did you hear.....?????*

Sometimes there are some really good stories out there! Our ears tend to pick up on those “juicy” stories, where someone else’s life is way more problematic than our own. And then, to be the bearer of such news – oh, the joy! Many people like being “in the know.” It gives them a sense of status. It doesn’t matter if you are reading the newspaper, scrolling through Facebook, or watching national news — gossip is everywhere.

Most of the time, gossip is born out of an ambiguous situation, one where we do not have all the answers. Think about the last time you watched a “breaking news” report on TV. Very quickly, reporters and viewers start weighing in, speculating, and hypothesizing. This isn’t done to create drama; it’s an effort to try to find understanding or meaning — a natural tendency for humans. This can happen not only with national events, but within our families and at our jobs. Think about the last time there were significant changes at your work but no one told you “why.” Before you know it rumors are flying! Sadly, though people believe those rumors and spread the information as though they are true.

In teams where gossip is allowed to flourish, you see a heavy impact — lost time and productivity, sabotaging each other, forming cliques in order to have allies, hurt feelings and low morale. Isn’t there enough in this world already that is negative? Why be a part of creating unnecessary negativity?

### Consider these ideas when you face gossip:

**Be the example.** People won’t use you as their gossip sounding board if you don’t do anything with the information!

**Refuse to be drawn in.** When you fall for it, you become part of a manipulation that someone began to feed his/her own ego.

**Use quick responses to shut it down.** “Who told you this and do they know you are telling me?” or, “Is it okay if I quote you when I check this out?” and, “Do I need to know this?”

**Focus on solutions vs. problems.** Instead of joining in on the complaining, ask the group what anyone thinks might work or help.

**Start some positive gossip!** Make a point to speak kindly of others to your group.



# Welcome to Holland

by Emily Perl Kingsley

*When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip – to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo. David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.*

*After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."*

*"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy.*

*But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.*

*The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.*

*So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.*

*It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills... and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.*

*But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."*

*But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things...about Holland.*

This essay was written for parents of children with special needs, and it fits beautifully. But I also think it fits all of our lives as well. How many times have you made your plans, and bought your guidebooks, only to have it all derailed? How many times have we ended up in Holland with a big decision to make: bemoan the fact that we are not in Italy, or look around and begin to find the beauty in our current "Hollandish" situation. I encourage you to begin to focus on the positives in your life, whatever your circumstances. If you need some support on that journey, give us a call.



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710 W. Prien Lake Rd., Suite 103, Lake Charles, LA 70601  
337-310-2822 [www.solutions-eap.org](http://www.solutions-eap.org)