



Dear L. A. Plume,

□□□□□□□□□□ *What do you do when someone comes to you with gossip about what someone supposedly said about you? This person is a relatively new “friend” and has told me things that long-time friends have said about me – things that are very hurtful. And to make matters worse, the people about whom he is saying these things are supposedly friends of his also. So he’s not only hurting me, and my relationship with these people, but he’s hurting them as well, especially as I doubt they know what he is doing. Now I don’t know who to trust, so I’m just keeping the barn door closed. I realize it’s human nature to talk about other people and I’ve been known to have a few lively conversations myself, but not with any malice in mind. How do I handle this the next time it happens?*

Hurt and Confused

Dear Hurt and Confused,

When someone presents you with information like that, your first inclination should be to wonder why. You know for sure what the person is telling you, but you don’t actually know if it’s true. Therefore, it seems the primary intention of telling you what someone supposedly said is to hurt you – and the other person, the one who supposedly said it, is the other casualty. Here are a couple of quotes I’ve come across that make the point:

Gossip & Girl Talk

Written by L.A. Plume

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“A man said to another: ‘I heard this man saying such and such thing about you behind your back.’ He replied: ‘He shot an arrow and it missed me, so why have you picked it up to stab me with it?’”

“There comes a time in your life when you must realize if they gossip about everyone to you, then they are gossiping about you too.”

If your new “friend” attempts this again, I would simply ask: “Why are you telling me this?” If that doesn’t give him pause and make him stop, the follow up could be, “I’ll have to ask so-and-so why he would ever say that about me.” A whole other tactic would be that wonderful southern phrase: “But he speaks so highly of you!” which may or may not do the trick depending on his intellectual acuity. Or there is always the time honored phrase, “Well, bless your heart for wanting me to know about this.”

Good luck!

L.A.Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

□□□□□□□□□□ *What has happened to good old-fashioned manners – i.e. men opening the door for us, asking us what we would like to order in a restaurant and then ordering for us, walking on the outside when we walk down the street, calling us for a date ahead of time and having a plan? When did we lose out status as the “fairer sex,” why are we considered equal to men in social and other ways? I just want to be a girl who gets flowers and has doors opened for her; what are the chances?*

Rose

Dear Rose,

You'll have to go back in history and ask Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, who apparently liked to open their own doors and didn't like flowers and didn't care if the rest of us did, in a nutshell. Obviously their stories are bigger than that but, as I have been told, left some women a legacy with certain social and cultural repercussions for which they didn't ask. Maybe your best option is to wait by the unopened door and just hope for the flowers.

L.A.Plume