

SITE SPECIFIC LEADERSHIP, INC.

Truth, Goodness, and Usefulness

It's just human nature to be social and talk about the important issues in our daily lives. But what happens when this dialog takes a twist outside of anything close to the truth?

Most of us have been guilty at one time or another, of passing along a rumor without even giving a thought to whether it's true or not. Perhaps it's our need for drama and excitement to perpetuate a story that is juicy and interesting.

How would it improve our community and good will, if each one of us begins eliminating rumors by refusing to pass them along, and by not silently watching as they spread their poison?



A long time ago, in ancient Greece, while Socrates was frequenting the market place, where he often spent his time asking questions and provoking discussions on ethical considerations, he was approached by an acquaintance. Socrates believed his mission was to question people and induce them to think for themselves.



This acquaintance asked, "Socrates, do you know what I just heard about your friend?" "Hold on a minute," Socrates replied. "Before telling me anything I'd like you to pass a little test. It's called the Triple Filter Test." LOITER

"Triple Filter?"

"That's right," Socrates continued. "Before you talk to me about my friend, it might be a good idea to take a moment and filter what you're going to say. The first filter is Truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?"

"No," the man said, "actually I just heard about it and. ..."

"All right," said Socrates. "So you don't really know if it's true or not. Now let's try the second filter, the filter of Goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my friend something good?"

"No, on the contrary...."

"So," Socrates continued, "you want to tell me something bad about him, but you're not certain it's true.

The man shrugged, a little embarrassed.

Flo@SiteSpecificLeadership.com

Copyright © 2011 by Flo Mauri, Site Specific Leadership
All rights reserved. Do not copy without permission

SITE SPECIFIC LEADERSHIP, INC.

Socrates continued. "You may still pass the test though, because there's one filter left: the filter of Usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my friend going to be useful to me?"

"No, not really"

"Well," concluded Socrates, "if what you want to tell me is neither true nor good nor even useful, why tell it to me at all?"

The man was defeated and ashamed.

There would be no or little gossip if everyone followed Socrates' Triple Filter Test. But that is not the case. Gossip runs rampant.

Ironically and tragically, in 399BC, Socrates was put on trial in Athens for disbelieving in the Gods of the state and for teaching others his beliefs - the ultimate victim of gossip, jealousy and backstabbing. Here's his address to the court who accused him, "...I do not know and cannot tell the names of my accusers... All of whom from envy and malice have persuaded you - some of them having first convinced themselves - all this class of men are most difficult to deal with; for I cannot have them up here and cross-examine them, and therefore I must simply fight with shadows in my own defense, and argue when there is no one who answers."



Flo@SiteSpecificLeadership.com

Copyright © 2011 by Flo Mauri, Site Specific Leadership
All rights reserved. Do not copy without permission