



HERS OPINION HIS



Do Not Believe Everything You Hear About People: Rumors

By VICKIE HUGHES

"Look at all these rumors surrounding me every day...I can't take it no more..." Words sung by Club Nouveau in a song called "Rumores" jokingly reminds us that rumors are everywhere. Unfortunately, rumors are a part of our daily lives. Fortunately, most rumors we hear are not even true. But this characteristic is what makes rumors what they really are. Rumors are speculations about people, places, or things. Rumors are not facts, but mere hearsay. How do they get started, and more importantly, who starts them?

Personally, I feel that rumors are started by those who have nothing better to do or those who spend time feeling jealous of others. Often, rumors are started maliciously to hurt others. Rumors often begin as a conscious effort to destroy someone else's character, social standing, or emotional well-being.

Rumors can also develop from everyday conversations when someone says something and someone else misinterprets what was said. I'm sure that we are all familiar with the game we played as children. The initiator of the game whispered something into a child's ear. That child passed on the information to the next child. This process continued until the last child received the information. The last child repeated the information out loud. By the time the information got to the last person, the information was so distorted it could not even be recognized as the original statement. Something went wrong during the communication process. In each case there was a breakdown of communication between the speaker and the listener. The breakdown of communication present in this popular game carries over into real-life situations. Perhaps we all need to sharpen our listening skills. Misinterpreted information can hurt many people in the long run.

Rumors can be harmful to people in work situations. Office gossip about a person's job performance or

social behavior away from the office takes on the form of rumors and can prevent a person from getting a promotion, raise, or recognition. Gossip filters up from those in entry-level positions all the way up to those in upper management positions. An employee may be seen at a social function that another employee is attending. The employee is extremely drunk and acting like a total fool. When this information reaches the office, the employee's behavior is viewed as inappropriate social behavior. Although this incident occurred away from work, it still has a negative impact on the person's reputation at work.

Rumors can ruin relationships with family members, friends, or partners. The most common rumors I hear are the ones where one person is supposed to be cheating on the other. And these rumors spread quickly around the community. Let me remind you that rumors are speculations about people and their behavior.

If we see someone out in public with someone we are not accustomed to seeing then with, the person is automatically labelled as someone who is "cheating" on his/her partner. How do we know that the person seen with them is not a relative, friend, or co-worker? Yet, our minds start working, we put two and two together, and thus begins a rumor as we tell another person what we have seen or heard. And I've noticed that rumors spread even faster if we tell someone not to tell anyone else. The rumor spreads like a disease. And it always seems that the person who is the subject of the rumor is the last to find out about the rumor. Amazing!

Twisted rumors are the sickest of all. Again, our listening skills are lacking in many instances. Let me share a disturbing rumor with you that developed 4-5 years ago. A friend of mine got married shortly after our college graduation. During the Christmas holidays, my friend was killed in a car accident as she was driving to work. Her husband called a few of her friends to let those

close to her know what has happened.

A year later, I was talking to a girl who graduated with us. She lived in another part of the country than I did at the time. She, too, had heard of my friend's death. However, I became aware of the fact that the circumstances of my friend's death had transformed into an ugly rumor that had travelled all over the country. Here's the story that his girl heard: my friend's husband was in his law school class (he was indeed in law school) and my friend was home alone. The doorbells rang and when she opened the door, she found an old boyfriend standing outside with some flowers for her. She invited him in and while he was inside, this old boyfriend killed her.

After hearing this rumor, I cried. My friend was not even around to defend herself. And can you imagine how her husband and her family members felt if they too heard that rumor? I know that this rumor was not started maliciously, but developed as a result of someone not listening carefully. Someone heard what he/she wanted to hear and passed on the information to someone else. How sick!

Before we open our big mouths to start or spread another rumor, let's think before we speak or act. Who are we hurting in the long run? We may be damaging someone's character or ego for life. We also should stop and think about how we are being perceived by others when we participate in this malicious and harmful behavior. I, myself, have no desire whatsoever to be known in the community as "a gossiper"! Before we "spread the work" about someone else, let's get our facts straight, decide if this information warrants acknowledgment, and learn to distinguish between good and bad rumors. Perhaps it's best just to keep our mouths closed. Anyone with "zero" intelligence can start a rumor. Starting rumors takes very little effort. Let's focus on the good we find in people rather than the bad. Over the years I've learned to keep my mouth shut. Have you?

By ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.

Webster's dictionary defines rumors as "unverified information of uncertain origin usually spread by word of mouth; gossip; hearsay. Also to spread or tell by rumor..."

If I took seriously everything that I heard about myself or thought that others might accept it as fact, I would probably be a resident at Dammasch Hospital under intense medication to ease my schizophrenic behavior. Some people can actually go crazy worrying about what people think about them or possibly "stress out" because of what others say. Why do people consciously degrade, spread vicious lies/rumors, and assassinate others' character? According to individuals I discussed this matter with, low self-esteem, petty jealousies, failed relationships, envy, and hate can prompt people to act maliciously.

Remember in junior high school, when they held an assembly to address how rumors and lies get started? The principle sat six students (in chairs) on stage. He then gave one student a short story to read and asked each student to read, analyze, and share the story with the person seated next to them. The students explained the original "lips to ear" story to each other, but it was totally different when the audience finally heard it. The exercise clearly pointed out how easy it is to change a story, how people do not listen, pay attention to details, and more importantly, showed how easy it is to form opinions about issues or other human beings. Dr. Darryl Tukufu, President of the Portland Urban League, delivered a great speech at the annual dinner two weeks ago about how communications falls through the cracks simply because people do not listen or get the facts straight. He was great. To get the facts wrong is one story, but to consciously get information wrong or degrade other

people is a decadent act.

Recently, I was asked to participate in a promotional spot on "Interracial Marriages" for AM Northwest without giving the social repercussions any real thought. It is not uncommon for KATU employees to help shows like Sunday NW, AM NW, and Town Hall by serving as talent for various spots/commercials. Janice Bangs, a white female and the producer of this particular show on "Interracial Marriages", was the woman opposite me in this promotional spot. We sat on the couch, in the KATU studios I might add, and looked through a scrapbook like many couples do. We smiled at the pictures, made eyes at each other, and laughed as the voice of Dick Novak belted "Interracial Marriages, tomorrow at nine on AM Northwest." Basically, the promo lasted about fifteen seconds, but what followed has yet to end and the rumors/stories get greater by the day.

First of all, I received about 13 telephone calls from viewers/friends (or those I considered friends) criticizing me for being covertly married to a white woman, questioning me about why I never brought her out in public and one person even called me a "sellout" because I write so much "pro Black" material for this publication. I even received calls from females, who were more interested in me than I was when I first arrived back to Portland, cursing me for "being married" all the time and even a few more expressed their disappointment about not being invited to the wedding. One "friend" even suggested that my credibility in the Black community would greatly drop now that I'm married to a white woman. In every one of the cases mentioned above, no one ever asked me if I was married or not. They either assumed it or believed what the television projected. Is television that strong or are people that dumb? Or both?

One person (God Bless her soul),

who works for the Bureau of Labor and Industries (Civil Rights), had the nerve to do what others failed to do. She called me and asked me about the promo, point blank. She even went on to say how people were having a field day blasting me, my character, and white wife. I laughed on the telephone. First of all, I am not married to anyone, let alone a white woman. If I were married to a white woman, I would care less about what others thought because it would be my personal choice. It would be no one's business but my own. Another good friend told me about a person, who sarcastically asked her had she "heard the latest about your friend Tucker?" She replied no. He then went on to tell her about my covert interracial marriage. Where will it all end? People must have a great deal of idle time on their hands if that's all they have to spread rumors that is. Strangely, none of the "friends" of the white woman called her about being "married" to a Black man covertly.

My lady friend, who thinks that it is funny, suggests that if I was a more public person people would not have to fill in the cracks about me. Actually, I enjoy my private and personal space very much. The more people you have in your life, the more complicated your life can get and who needs additional drama? I would much rather have a couple of good friends in my life than several who do not have my best interest at heart. Besides, Portland is too small. You have to be most careful about the type of people you bring into your life. If you don't have anything nice to say about people, don't say anything at all. My grandmother Tucker once told me that if you wanted to know something about someone or something, then go to the source or the horse's mouth. From idle minds, comes idle chatter. Did you hear about the time...



Next Week's Her's And His' Opinion Understanding And Accepting Death

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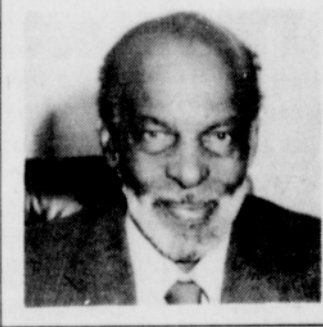
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HEALTH CHECK-UPS FOR WOMEN OFFERED

A health check-up for women will be given from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, August 11, 1990 at Western States Chiropractic College's Outpatient Clinic, 2900 N.E. 132nd Avenue in Portland. The \$10 examination fee will cover the cost of a pap smear, breast exam, spinal examination, and urinary lab test. The check-ups are administered by fourth-year interns under the supervision of chiropractic physicians. Appointments are necessary and may be made by calling 255-6771.

WOMEN'S CRISIS LINE

The Portland Women's Crisis Line is pleased to announce openings for its September Direct Service Worker (on-line volunteer) Training. Volunteers are now needed to help staff the crisis line. No experience is necessary. However, only a limited number of spaces are available for training. PWCL operates a 24 hour a day crisis intervention hotline for women and children (and their families and friends) who are victims of domestic violence, rape, incest and sexual harassment. The 40 hours of training classes begin September 11. Interested women should call 232-9751 and ask for the Volunteer Coordinator. Deadline for Acceptance into the program is Friday, August 24. PWCL is a non-profit, tax exempt organization, funded in part by the United Way. Practicum students are encouraged to apply. Credit is available for this work.



PERSPECTIVES

By Professor McKinley Burt

We Are All In This One Together

Thank you for your spirited response to my last week's essay, "Loggers Are Hurting Too!" It is important for African Americans to realize that there is considerable economic pain being inflicted across the board in this country--Black, white, and as the old saying goes, "blue, grey or grizzle." As we are aware, the last two administrations in Washington have exhibited a most flagrant disregard for the basic welfare of their constituencies, expressing a contempt not before seen in modern times. No sector has been sacrosanct: infants, children, youth, adults or seniors.

And while the citizenry reeled under the pressure of ever-inflated prices, soaring health costs and the decapitation of basic and essential social programs, the friends (campaign contributors) of these politicians were rewarded with the great golden ripoff since the Post-Civil War Reconstruction--HALF-A-TRILION DOLLARS IN SAVINGS AND LOAN LOOT, and still climbing. It is all of us poor slobs, whatever ethnic group, who are going to pick up the tab,

and in a score of different ways. Already, the "Education President" has suggested the beer and cocktail drinkers embrace his latest regressive plan to reduce the deficit.

Another fact has proven startling and disconcerting to many African Americans, and that is the revelation that millions of white Americans suffer from the very same educational inequities that have been inflicted upon Black youth. American industry has deplored their lack of basic skills as well; and, as in the case with ethnic minorities, has indicted the educational establishment for its gross failures to deliver a quality product. It is certainly hoped that the nationwide intervention of the business community is in time to turn the tide. There is no way in the world that America can fit its "behind-schedule" students into that "Year Two Thousand" time table but the country could achieve some startling results with this "third-party" intervention.

Close to home, the July 24 issue of the Oregonian informs us that a "Survey Finds 9,802 Students Quit in '88-'89" but in the next breath, the subheading rather shakes us up, "One official says it will take THREE MORE YEARS TO GET AN ACCURATE PICTURE of how many Oregonians give up on school." How fortunate we are that the business community is mounting a major intervention in a patently sloppy process. I can't begin to imagine--and have never worked for--a successfully "for profit" enterprise that attempted to meet its marketing goals using a reporting

system with such obvious and long-known data retrieval disabilities. The article quotes a number of such failures: "That produced unreliable data and didn't take into account the students who left one district and enrolled in school in another--Projecting it out [a one-year time frame] over four years can't be done because until now, everybody measured dropouts with a DIFFERENT YARD-STICK."

Last week's article as stated emphasized the all-encompassing nature of the increasing economic travails which besiege us. Very belatedly the powers-that-be have revealed many new financial shocks to the state's infrastructure--long-term and disastrous consequences that were blithely ignored by the Spotted Owl enthusiasts. Not only will the direct timber severance allocations to education districts be lost, but the critical local tax bases will be severely eroded in a number of Oregon counties--where it was already as difficult as heck to get a school levy passed. Still, we are spoken to as though we were fools, "TOURISM WILL MAKE IT UP!"

And it is not only the "downstate" white folks who are going to suffer, but the inevitable "domino effect" will cascade right up to Portland, vacating downtown offices and reducing the number of chic lunches and the burden of hundreds of smart attache cases. The effect will be noticeable in Northeast also. Critical social programs will experience some cutbacks. Yes, "We Are All In This Together."

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