

University of Groningen

Why we gossip

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Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:

2017

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Martinescu, E. (2017). *Why we gossip: A functional perspective on the self-relevance of gossip for senders, receivers and targets*. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. University of Groningen, SOM research school.

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Propositions

1. Gossip is fundamental to all human collectives (Nicholas Emler).
2. Gossip is functional for all members of the gossip triad: it helps fulfill needs of senders (Chapter 2), it helps self-evaluation of receivers (Chapter 3), and it helps generating adaptive responses from targets (Chapter 4).
3. Gossip has functions distinct from those of formal communication (Chapters 2 and 4).
4. Women may be more interested and more responsive to gossip than men (Chapters 3 and 4).
5. Like the Garden of Eden, gossip promises knowledge of good and evil. It also threatens us with expulsion if we are caught (Maryann Ayim).
6. Gossip's energies lend themselves simultaneously to the destruction and sustenance of human ties (Patricia Spacks).
7. Gossip brings ethics home by introducing abstract morality into the mundane (John Sabini and Maury Silver).
8. To understand just one life, you have to swallow the world (Salman Rushdie).
9. The only time people dislike gossip is when you gossip about them (Will Rogers).
10. There is a sense in which we are all each other's consequences (Wallace Stegner).